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Glen A. Pierce

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evangelical

VISITOR

February 1996



By providing a comfortable atmosphere where Christianity is lived out and where non-Christians feel at ease, homes can be great tools for bringing people to Christ. Home-based evangelism has almost limitless possibilities!

Special People

Florence and Millard Hostetter



A surprise appreciation service honoring Florence and Millard Hostetter was held recently by the Rosebank Brethren in Christ Church, Hope, Kansas. They were presented with a distinguished service plaque for their commitment, faithfulness, and combined 79 years of loyal attendance and dedicated service. Millard and Florence deeply love the Lord and have communicated a message of the power of faith with their entire lives—a deep, personal faith that is rooted in their belief that God can change lives. They are both a blessing, touching lives and making an exceptional difference in their church and community.

The following was composed and shared by Angeline Plank-Anderson during the service.

To Millard:

It's true the church is all of God's family,
those he died for—to reclaim.
But folks also need a building in which to worship
and sing praises to his name.
We don't work our way to heaven,
but faith must be kept alive, after we have been forgiven.
Through the years we heard you say
that your talents were so few.
God says there are many different gifts;
something that each one can do.
So you became a "keeper of the house";
you gave of yourself as he asks,
Believing for strength and guidance
that you might perform all your tasks.
In his house here you saw
hearts made right,
tears of sorrow—smiles of delight.

You said goodbye to loved ones who were taken home
and welcomed young new ones in the days to come.
The Bible says there's a time to tear, and a time to repair.
A time to work, and a time to share.

Times there were when the heavy rains came;
to the church you'd go to see if things were the same.
Sometimes with mops, pumps and whatnot,
you'd begin to clean when the rains had stopped.
At times, of course, things needed repairs;
some paint or fixing on the stairs.
Days when the lights or furnace didn't work right;
you'd become an electrician overnight,
Fixing and doing with hammers and such
just anything that needed your touch.

Now you were a keeper of God's house and your home
came to be
a place much known for warm hospitality.
Many years you and Florence worked side by side,
making it pleasant for folks to abide.

We know you, Millard, as a practical man,
One of character when put to the test.
Whatever was asked—you gave it your best.
You have been a faithful servant
of those tasks given to you.

God rewards your kind of person;
they are his chosen few.
Your heavenly place won't
need repairs,
the rains and storms won't come.
You may just sit down by the Master
and enjoy your perfect home.
Our love and appreciation we
give you today;
may God bless you always
the rest of the way.

SPECIAL NOTE:
Articles about "Special People" in their teens, 20s, 30s, and 40s are invited.

"Special People" profiles a wide variety of Brethren in Christ members of all ages and from all walks of life.

YOU are invited to submit a short article about some "Special Person" you would like to introduce to Visitor readers. Articles should be typewritten, preferably 300-400 words, and must have the approval of the person being profiled. If your article is accepted for publication, we will contact you to secure a photo for publication (which will be returned).

Mail your article to Evangelical Visitor, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550.

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"Open Home, Open Hearts"

by Keith D. Wright



Many Christians have the gift of hospitality, along with beautiful homes conducive for entertaining. By providing a comfortable atmosphere where Christianity is lived out and where non-Christians feel at ease, homes can be great tools for bringing people to Christ. Home-based evangelism has almost limitless possibilities!

Jesus enjoyed spending time in people's homes—where he preached, discussed theological truths, shared meals, and lodged. As a guest Jesus developed deep and intimate relationships, sharing every aspect of his life with friends. His friends willingly responded to Jesus' message of salvation because they knew he cared for them—a love they experienced in their own homes!

Homeowners became Jesus' partners when they offered their homes

as a base for evangelistic ministry. Jesus' ministry continues today in homes opened to him, through the Holy Spirit.

Hospitality in Jesus' ministry *Preaching and teaching*

Eager listeners once packed the house, clamoring to hear Jesus' life-giving words (Mark 2:1-12). Four men knew Jesus could heal their friend—paralyzed and on a stretcher—if they could just get him inside. Unable to push through the crowd, they dug a hole through the roof and lowered their friend to Jesus' feet. A well-prepared presentation on the Christian faith will attract attention. You don't need to trick or coerce people into attending creative outreach events.

One evening, I was to meet a friend for pizza. Our wires got crossed, and I showed up on the wrong night. Hungry, I decided to order and eat alone. Two men seated nearby soon struck up a conversa-

tion, and invited me to their home for a cup of coffee. Having no other plans, I accepted the invitation. Arriving at their home, I met a dozen others who were "invited" for coffee as well. The two men, recruiters for a cult, lured me to their house under false pretenses. Although interested in learning about the group's teachings, I didn't hear much of the presentation because my mind was preoccupied with resentment and a desire to leave!

Don't ambush your friends. Be enthusiastic in your invitation and tell them a gospel presentation will take place. Assure your friends that their opinions will be respected. People will come to an evangelistic social event if they are clear on the concept.

A home provides an excellent venue for seminars and presentations on Christian-related subjects. Seminars can include videos, lectures, and panel discussions.

Keith D. Wright lives in Kansas City, Mo.

Address issues faced in everyday life—making sure the presentation is lively, not boring.

Theological discussions

People are searching for guidance regarding issues they face. Some have sincere questions about Christianity. Church activities don't always provide enough opportunities for honest questions and open dialogue. Homes provide a more relaxed atmosphere where seekers can discover answers.

Once Jesus was invited to a dinner party. During the meal a woman with a questionable past began wiping Jesus' feet with tears, her hair, and expensive perfume. Jesus used this incident to stimulate discussion about the nature of God's forgiveness. He told a parable, then forgave her sins. "Who is this who even forgives sin?" became the topic of their discussion (Luke 7: 49). When people encounter Jesus, and discover his radical teachings and claims, dialogue ensues.

Invite groups into your home to exchange ideas and perspectives. Relieve pressure from the group by not forcing the discussion to a Christian consensus by the end of the evening. Don't be threatened that non-Christians might dominate the conversation with contrary views. Be prepared to contribute a Christian point of view, and to share from your personal experience. You'll find that, when respected, people will listen intently to your ideas. A benefit of articulating your beliefs is developing greater clarity about what you believe.

Eating

The Gospels are peppered with accounts of Jesus sharing meals with his followers—a reputation that brought criticism. "The Pharisees... asked his disciples: 'Why does he eat with tax collectors and "sinners"?''" (Mark 2:16). Jesus knew a secret: Breaking bread breaks down barriers, strengthens relationships, and prepares people for wholeness.

People love to eat! Food presentation doesn't need to be highly formal or extra fancy. Simply ask the

Holy Spirit to bless your efforts, and bring on the food!

Lodging

Jesus counted on homes being opened to his disciples. Matthew 10:11-14 relates how Jesus sent out teams to proclaim God's kingdom values. They were to search out the hospitable in every village they entered—rewarding good hospitality with a blessing, withholding the blessing if no hospitality was shown. By providing lodging to the disciples, these hosts unknowingly showed hospitality to Jesus himself (Matthew 25:45).

Visiting speakers, missionaries on furlough, and people in transition sometimes need short-term lodging. Others (like women with unplanned pregnancies and friends going through divorce) need longer-term living arrangements. Arrange a spare bedroom or portion of the basement as a place of rejuvenation. The goal of lodging ministry: restoration—of the body, of relationships, of the soul (Philemon 22).

Hospitality in the early church

Hospitality played a major role in the early church's missionary efforts. Those witnessing the resurrection were left with the directive to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). As observers of history's greatest miracle, they were highly motivated to accept Jesus' challenge. Before the advent of hotel chains, frequent flier clubs, and fast food, travel was hard and inconvenient. These itinerant evangelists, however, were undaunted by the difficulty—traveling great distances to tell Jesus' story. Warm meals, dry places to sleep, and friendly companionship were answers to their traveling prayers. Arriving in a city, they customarily preached in the local synagogue first. If they were kicked out, they

would conduct worship services in a new convert's home. Many came to know Christ in these home churches which soon dotted the map of the Roman Empire.

The early Christians were primarily from Jewish backgrounds—raised in a tradition that fiercely attempted to preserve its religious and social heritage. Jewish culture feared outsiders as potential upsets of social institutions, as people to be kept at a distance. Foreigners

For the early church, spreading the salvation message involved wholeheartedly embracing persons who were culturally and philosophically different, inviting Gentiles into their homes, and being guests of those holding different worldviews.

(literally translated, "appearing strange") and aliens ("creating distaste") were not to marry Jews, participate in temple worship, or own land in Israel.

Jews converting to Christianity needed to transform their attitudes about foreigners. The practice of agape love required Christians to embrace foreigners and welcome them into the family of believers. The Greek word translated "hospitality" literally means "love of strangers." Spreading the salvation message involved wholeheartedly embracing persons who were culturally and philosophically different, inviting Gentiles into their homes, and being guests of those holding different worldviews.

New Testament Christians were always to be ready (Hebrews 13:2) to show hospitality—doing so with zeal (Romans 12:11-13) and cheerfulness (1 Peter 4:9), without expecting earthly rewards (Luke 14:12-14). The New Testament highlights two groups of people whose ministries were punctuated with this kind of hospitality: bishops and widows. As church leaders,

bishops utilized their homes for evangelistic purposes, for prayer meetings, for entertaining traveling missionaries, and as a place to model Christ-centered family relationships. Similarly, widows hosted women's and discipleship ministries.

Hospitality today

We too can practice hospitality with an evangelistic twist by developing the attitudes of preparedness, zeal, cheerfulness, and generosity.

Be prepared

Opportunities to practice hospitality sometimes come along at unexpected moments. Could you put someone up for the night with only an hour's notice? Are you willing to use your residence for outreach activities? Have you developed a knack for helping people feel comfortable and welcome in your home?

Several years ago, stranded 500 miles from home, I reluctantly drove to a nearby church parking lot to camp out in my car. As I unrolled a sleeping bag in the back seat, the church's youth pastor walked across the parking lot. Not wanting me

spend the night in a car, he invited me, a complete stranger, to sleep at his house. He offered me a bed, and served a warm breakfast in the morning. He was ready to show hospitality at a moment's notice.

By preparing to host potential guests, and allowing God to bless our efforts when opportunities arise, we can minister to someone's physical and spiritual needs.

Be cheerful

A joyful spirit exudes cheerfulness, and is characteristic of God at work in a Christian's life. Cheerfulness is contagious. A home filled with laughter helps people let down their guard and feel at ease. People are more receptive to hearing life-changing truth when they do not feel threatened.

Be zealous

Are you proactive about opening your home to nonbelievers? Do you look for new and creative ways to use your home for God? Are you less enthusiastic about having non-Christians over than Christian guests? Perhaps you are holding too tightly to your home—being selfish

about sharing a valuable resource to reach non-Christians. We are only stewards, caretakers, of the dwellings God gives us. Don't wait for company to knock on your door. Be an inviter!

Be generous

Christian hospitality is practiced without expectation of payback. Of course, many rewards spring out of evangelistic entertaining—friendships, watching people become Christians in your home, laughter, and the satisfaction of putting your faith into practice. But these rewards are not our primary motivation. Let's be generous in this life, knowing our true reward will be to enjoy God's perfect hospitality in our eternal home.

Many Christians would like to open their homes for evangelistic purposes, but need some creative tips. Try some of these "inreach" ideas in your home.

Dinners for Eight

Dinners for Eight are popular among one church's membership. Eight people gather for dinner, fellowship, and fun. By including a few non-Christians, new relationships often emerge—leading to invitations to Sunday school classes, worship services, and special church events where the gospel is presented.

Fondue Party

Who can resist chocolate? Invite a group over with the explicit invitation to "Fondue and a Discussion of the Christian Faith." Enjoy socializing and dessert. Then have a spiritually mature person make a 10-minute presentation on the relevancy of a relationship with Christ. Open a discussion time for guests to ask questions.

A group of 20 people is best, half non-Christians. Variations on this theme could include evangelistic barbecues, coffee tasting parties, or burrito bars.

Literary Society

Reading groups have gained popularity over the past few years. Begin your own literary society that includes seekers. Gather monthly in a living room to discuss, debate, and dissect a selected reading. Choose Christian and secular authors. Whatever book is chosen, believers can contribute a Christian perspective to the discussion. Encourage an atmosphere of intellectual honesty where believers and nonbelievers alike stretch their thinking.

Youth House

Teenagers love to just hang out. They appreciate homes where they are welcomed, where a wholesome atmosphere provides a place for friendships, and where parents are involved and listen. Maybe your home can be such a place. Not only will you minister to kids, but you will model Christian hospitality for the next generation.

Invite people over! Live by faith! Be creative! Help your guests to experience abundant living through Christian friendships and a relationship with Jesus Christ!

The long, dark shadow of the centurion

by John K. Stoner

WHO WAS THE CENTURION?

It is easier to say who he has become, in Christian (and increasingly, “peace church” Christian) circles, so let us begin there. The centurion has become the human model through whom Jesus Christ is made compatible with violence, the military profession, and the ubiquitous, deadly, and unnecessary institution of war.

This is no small load for one man in history to carry. The nameless centurion has risen to mythic proportions. Let us examine the myth more closely.

When someone asks whether Jesus or his followers may be engaged in war, or some aspect of the vast superstructure which undergirds the institution of war (military “service” or civilian support of military structures), the discussion seldom goes far before Jesus’ response to the Roman centurion is appealed to as proof that Jesus did not condemn intergroup lethal conflict.

The account of the centurion in Matthew 8 reports that a centurion in Capernaum appealed to Jesus to come and heal his servant. Jesus responded that he would come. The centurion immediately protested that he was unworthy for Jesus to come under his roof, and that Jesus could just speak the word and the servant would be healed. I understand how authority works, the centurion said. I speak a word and men obey my command. You can do the same. No need to come to my house.

Jesus was amazed at the man’s faith, and exclaimed, “Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (8:10-12, NRSV).

Then Jesus turned to the centurion and said, “Go; let it be done for you according to your faith” (8:13). And the servant was healed in that hour. End of the story.

There is no report that Jesus rebuked the centurion for his soldiering profession. This is taken as strong evidence, if not absolute proof, that Jesus approved of soldiering, justified war, and was not a pacifist.

At least two things are lacking in this use of the story. First, it reflects a total disregard for the most elementary sensitivity to the cultural, religious, and political realities of the situation. Who was a centurion to a Jew in first-century Palestine? Everything in the story hangs on the cultural implications of the encounter between Jesus and the centurion.

The centurion was the feared and hated representative of the Roman occupation forces in Palestine. Some thirty years earlier, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, at nearby Sepphoris, Roman forces led by centurions had crucified 2,000 Jews along the roadway in retaliation for a Jewish uprising against the Roman occupation of their country. Such deeds are not forgotten in thirty years. Jews had no admiration for the spiffy military uniforms of Roman centurions. They certainly did not see centurions as the guardians of democracy and the freedom to worship God as they pleased, unmolested in their comfortable Sunday morning sanctuaries. The centurion was a hated enemy soldier. He was not one of ours, but one of theirs.

Secondly, the militarist interpretation of this story ignores the main point of the story, which is the astonishing discovery of faith in a character as foreign and repulsive as a centurion. Matthew accents this by reporting Jesus’ shocking announcement that all sorts of people from east and west will enter God’s reign while the insiders, the church-going presumed heirs, will be shut out

altogether. Luke dramatizes this alien faith by reporting that the centurion sends Jewish elders to request healing for his son. The Jewish heirs come and begin to make an appeal for the healing based on the worthiness of the centurion. Then the centurion sends friends to Jesus, saying that he feels unworthy that Jesus should come under his roof. The play on worthy/unworthy sets the stage for Jesus' words: "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith."

So Jesus' encounter with the centurion is another story of astonishing grace. God is gracious even to enemy soldiers. Jesus reaches out to Caesar's centurions, Hitler's storm troopers, Stalin's SS men, Saddam's royal guard, IDF forces in the occupied West Bank, Arafat's body guard, U.S. marines. Jesus did not condemn the

centurion; he set him on the path of redemption. That is what Jesus does for sinners, for transgressors, for enemies; shall we say, for people. Jesus did not condemn the woman taken in adultery. He did not thereby put his stamp of approval for all time on adultery. He set the woman on the path of redemption and a new life. He did the same for the centurion.

The only thing we can learn about Jesus' attitude toward violence and war from his encounter with the centurion is a surprising example of how to think about enemy soldiers.

John K. Stoner is a member of the Lancaster, Pa., Brethren in Christ congregation. He is also the coordinator of New Call to Peacemaking, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501.

Reflections on change— 1950 and 1995

by Henry A. Ginder

To bring change into a well-structured organization is usually painful.

In 1950, when church leaders had an in-depth discussion about the Brethren in Christ Church's lack of growth and why, they saw urgent need for change.

The General Conference then named the Review and Study Committee. We were charged to study the areas which needed change to move us from legalism to a biblical expression of what the church should be. This affected dress patterns, musical instruments in our churches, administrative structures, fellowship patterns, divorce and remarriage, etc. This was hard work. I was chairman of that committee. I know we all worked very hard.

As I rethink those days, I now read Titus 3:1-8, especially verses 1 and 2:

"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be

peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men."

I knew that my father, a retired bishop, did not like what we had to report to the 1951 General Conference. I urged him to go along to the General Conference in Kansas. As I sponsored my report, I struggled because I knew my father did not favor my recommendations. The Conference referred the matter to us for more work, and further reporting.

On the way home from Kansas, my father said, "I did not like your report to General Conference, but two things are settled: (1) I will always love God and the brethren, and (2) I will always cultivate the ability to respect my brethren's judgement." He didn't promise to respect our judgement, but only cultivate the ability to do so. That statement of my father has helped me many times during the past decades.

To use the words found in Titus 3:2, the Brethren in Christ Church remained "peaceful and considerate." And we came through a lot of change with a good spirit of unity.

I like our present vision as expressed in the statement, "250 growing, discipling and sending congregations by A.D. 2000."

To accomplish this we need several things to happen:

1. We need strong, clear teaching on our denominational distinctives—holiness and peace. (Read Hebrews 12:14.)
2. We need to focus on congregational and relational evangelism.
3. We need to major on small group programs for our churches.
4. We need to build a strong sense of unity and love into the body life of our congregations.
5. This calls for young people and older folks to enjoy and support each other in congregational life.
6. We will be proud to be Brethren in Christ and major on identity and integrity.
7. We need to emphasize love and caring for our pastoral families (Read Titus 3:8.)

These guidelines should help each congregation to make the adjustment necessary to reach our goal by A.D. 2000, and to be clearly and solidly Brethren in Christ. This means that we will gladly major on our distinctives—holiness and peace. If we lose either one of these, we are not "us" anymore.

I believe we will be clearly Brethren in Christ till Jesus comes!

A long-time church leader, Henry A. Ginder and his wife Martha now live at Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

The November 3-4, 1995, "Exploring the Brethren in Christ Identity" study conference met in the Archives room at Messiah College, hosted by the Center for Brethren in Christ Studies. Here are the reflections of 3 of the 107 persons who attended part or all of the study conference.

Exploring the Brethren in Christ identity

Who are the Brethren in Christ? I've been asked that question many times but one specific occasion holds a place in my memory. It was 1980. I was attending the "New Call to Peacemaking" seminar being held at Elizabethtown College. The conference body broke into small groups to discuss the presentation of a plenary session speaker. I was in a group with people I'd never met. We introduced ourselves and told of our church affiliations. I said my name and that I was Brethren in Christ. One of the group members asked, "Who are the Brethren in Christ?" As I thought about how I could answer clearly and concisely, someone in that same small group, whom I later learned was a Quaker, responded. He said, "The Brethren in Christ are Wesleyan-Mennonites." I was startled but I liked the answer. It seemed right. It captured the essence of where I understood the church to stand. It was concise. Until several years ago I've echoed that response when asked, "Who are the Brethren in Christ?"

However, I'm no longer comfortable with that answer. In addition to the fact that most contemporary people who ask the question haven't an idea about what it means to be Wesleyan or Mennonite, I am no longer convinced the label accurately reflects who we are or what we believe. As we met at Messiah College in early November to explore the Brethren in Christ identity, I sensed my unsurety regarding our identity echoed in many of the presentations. However, before I reflect upon what I believe we can do to begin to recapture our unique and I think, balanced theological perspective, I would like to comment upon several provocative ideas presented in our time together.

As the presenters brought their studies to bear on the topic at hand, I was intrigued with two things Luke Keefer Jr.

noted in his discussion on the "Three Streams in Our Heritage." First, the idea of three streams of influence was something to which I'd never given much thought. Yet as I considered what Keefer had to say, I concurred. The Brethren in Christ are really influenced by three distinct theological traditions. Anabaptism and Pietism have been alluded to in the Wesleyan-Mennonite label. The third stream was new. According to Keefer it is Evangelicalism.

Now Evangelicalism is a slippery term. For the sake of this article I would like to venture a definition that will attempt to place us all on the same page. As I am using the term, Evangelicalism is a tradition within the broad scope of Christian thinking which believes in the authority of Scripture, salvation by faith in the risen Lord Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer to give evidence to the forgiveness of sin, and the hope of Jesus' second coming. It is mildly Reformed with an emphasis on the cross. It may be caricatured as "Calvinism Lite." According to Keefer, this third stream has become an influence in the church. My experience over seventeen years of ministry with the church is that it has been the predominant influence.

Related to this, Keefer noted a shift has taken place in our theological orientation since Evangelicalism's influence. If I understood him correctly, what has happened is that the resurrection-focused orientation of Anabaptist and Wesleyan theology has been reworked by our embrace of Evangelicalism. The end result is a focal shift to a cross-centered orientation that is Reformed and Evangelical. This difference in orientation is subtle but critical. For example, prior to Evangelicalism's influence, our message of the cross called believers to a new way of living and separation from the world by the power of resurrection life at work through

the presence of the Holy Spirit within. After its influence, our proclamation emphasized the forgiveness of sin. Consequently there was less significance placed on the role of community in this new orientation. Greater importance was given to individual experience. Our commitment to things like peace and non-resistance, once an intrinsic element in our belief in Jesus as Lord, became peripheral in this new understanding of the faith. For the emphasis of Evangelicalism, particularly as it is practiced in North America, is saving souls, not changing lives.

What was it that inclined us to become susceptible to this new way of practicing theology? Was it a deliberate shift, thoughtfully and painstakingly plotted by our leadership? David Zercher attempted

If we are going to maintain an identity that is theologically and ecclesologically consistent with our understanding of the faith, we need to become more deliberate and less flexible regarding what we are willing to embrace.

to address this question by suggesting the blame might be fixed on two related Brethren in Christ phenomena. First was what the late Owen Alderfer referred to as "The Brethren mindset." According to Alderfer, "The Brethren mindset" recognizes that Christian truth is open-ended, reflects a willingness to incorporate beliefs from various sources, subordinates doctrinal rigidity to a sense of trust between believers, and recognizes the corporate body is more important than the parts. Without rejecting or embracing the thesis, Zercher went on to talk about ways this "Brethren mindset" has influenced the church. He made this observation: "Alderfer feared a displacement of Anabaptist values in the Brethren

Kevin Ryan is senior pastor of the Souderton (Pa.) Brethren in Christ Church.

in Christ Church, but his notion of the 'Brethren mindset' actually paved the way for the thing he feared."

The third paper to which I would like to refer is Naomi Stambaugh's work on community. Personally, I felt this topic had the most practical value for helping the church come together and realize its God-given potential. After all, the way we practice community reflects our faithfulness to the gospel and can profoundly influence our witness in the world. Jesus said they will know you are my disciples by the way you love one another (John 13:35). Unfortunately in the paper and the ensuing dialog, I had the impression we were dancing around the substantive issue—which in my estimation is creating a contemporary model for community

that will help us to truly influence one another for good. Instead, we focused our attention on traditions and expressions of community which I feel have outlived their usefulness in helping to create the kind of relationships that will affect people for Jesus Christ.

In this article I have failed to refer to several of the other thoughtful papers presented, including Dr. Dan Chamberlain's witty and articulate "Observations and Council." Let me simply say they are worth reading and will be published in the next issue of *Brethren in Christ History and Life*.

I would like to conclude with several impressions. First, our tradition which is rooted in the dual emphasis of Piety and Anabaptism has a legitimate place to

stand in the broader theological position known as Evangelicalism. We can learn from that body with their emphasis on God's grace and Christ's radical forgiveness of sin through the cross. And yet we must also realize we do not come to the theological table empty-handed. We have something very important to contribute. Jeff Garis noted that in the past, smaller groups have had significant influence upon the larger religious culture. He cited the Moravian influence upon John Wesley and subsequently Methodism as one example of that fact. Our resurrection-oriented theology is sorely needed in a religious culture where large populations claim an allegiance to Christ with little noticeable impact on the way they live. According to the research done by Yeatts and Burwell, we are moving in a similar direction. To counteract this trend we must not become so self-conscious about our size that we fail to incorporate in our evangelistic outreach a strong proclamation of what we believe the Christian life entails, even when our message does not correspond with the mainstream approach.

Secondly, I believe we are going to have to make a conscious effort at demonstrating to those who do not come from an historic Brethren in Christ background that they are welcomed and valued. One of the things that I noticed while seated in the group attending this conference was there were very few non-ethnic Brethren in Christ people involved. This was true for general attendance, as well as for those assigned the task of making the presentations and leading the responses. There was no representation from Miami, where the church seems to be exploding with new life. There were no internationals. That will need to change if we are serious about the things we believe and our need to reach out beyond our traditional population base.

Finally, I believe if we are going to maintain an identity that is theologically and ecclesiologically consistent with our understanding of the faith, we are going to have to work harder at stating what we believe to be non-negotiable. Without discontinuing our dialog and interaction with other theological traditions, without closing ourselves off from new truth, we are going to need to become more deliberate and less flexible regarding what we are willing to embrace. Maybe this is where our commitment to community can help us. Possibly what we need to do is work harder at finding ways to foster and pass on the things we hold dear. Rather than simply continue a practice

The study conference on Brethren in Christ identity reminded me of the better bull sessions (as we used to call them) from my college days. We heard some interesting and helpful suggestions about who Brethren in Christ are: that we are Christians concerned with experience lived out in obedient faith, or Christians committed to the visible church but co-opted by the larger evangelical movement, or Anabaptist revivalists. If we did nothing else, we

affirmed significant elements of our history. The Historical Society helps lay the foundation for us to understand ourselves through our past as it projects onto the present and future.

During the closing communion service, we sang hymns as the bread and the cup were passed around. I was struck that we no longer know the words of our hymns. Even "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" did not escape. We sang well, but without certainty that we know these words.

I had to wonder if, 50 years before, we would have stumbled over the words of the hymns we sang. Perhaps the change in music images the deeper social changes that have influenced the church. In fact, the influence of social change was the one vital area that we discussed relatively little.

We were eloquent about the theological changes we have endured, but it may be that the social change both drives and thrives on the theological change. At the least we need to talk

about it. For the record, I like both the hymns and contemporary music.

We need to make some connection between the archives (the room where the conference was held) and the world outside the church. The conference is a good foundation if we build on it, but a dead end if it remains an in-house task. Our concerns resonate with people who live in our world since we are part of the same human family. But if we talk

We noted that various theological influences bring change, especially the contemporary evangelical movement. I wonder if our cultural context may in fact be a greater force for change.

only among ourselves, we may as well keep quiet. Perhaps we will follow this discussion with more that make the connections between church and society. The Center for Brethren in Christ Studies has the opportunity to help us make these connections so that our past and present continue to have meaning in the future.

Daryl R. Climenhaga is pastor of the Christian Union Brethren in Christ Church, Garrett, Ind.

for tradition's sake, maybe it's time to develop a contemporary expression of the practice that highlights what it is our tradition is portraying.

David Zercher concluded his presentation with a question. It was, "Is our doctrinal statement a blueprint for who we want to be, or is it a reflection of an increasingly obsolete heritage?" I believe the way we answer that question will determine our identity in the years to come. More importantly, I believe the things we do to help the church at large answer that question will be the true reflection of who we are as Brethren in Christ

Being a third-generation Brethren in Christ is different than studying the denomination from an historical perspective. Having pursued studies in areas of the humanities other than religion and having an affinity for academic life, it was a pleasure to attend a study conference and hear scholarly papers presented by men and women who were grappling with the topic of Brethren in Christ identity.

It was helpful to review the three streams that are distinctive aspects of the Brethren in Christ: Anabaptism, with its emphasis on community, simplicity, peace, and living a life of obedience; Pietism, with its emphasis on heartfelt, life-changing salvation; and Wesleyanism with its emphasis on a crisis experience or "entire sanctification." Luke Keefer, Jr. identified evangelicalism as a fourth stream and additionally noted the influence of Calvinism experienced by the Brethren in Christ through the major evangelical publishing houses and institutions of higher education. Keefer posited that unlike the successful blending of the first three streams, we have been unsuccessful as a denomination in synthesizing evangelicalism into our identity.

Keefer, David Zercher, Leonard Chester, Samuel Brubaker, and Daniel Chamberlain all raised varying levels of concern and caution that I share regarding the increasing influence of evangelicalism and the Brethren in Christ denomination's sometimes unquestioning involvement in, and acceptance of, a range of parachurch organizations or movements, including the National Association of Evangelicals, Billy Graham Crusades, Youth for Christ, Promise Keepers, The Third Wave, and the Toronto blessing.

Zercher identified the distinction we should be making between "the *sense* of God's activity and the *reality* of God's activity," noting that claims of revival—as Jonathan Edwards encouraged—need to be evaluated. Keefer, too, urged critical evaluation to determine which aspects of evangelicalism are not compatible with the Brethren in Christ. Samuel Brubaker warned that we should not blindly accept the implied assertion of the Christian right that political conservatism is equated with Christianity.

Two aids in providing better grounding in Brethren in Christ theology were alluded to during discussion periods. Several people mentioned the value of the core courses that Brethren in Christ pastors are currently required to take. Dale Shaw pointed out, however, that prior to this relatively recent requirement, and during a period when many pastors were being brought in from outside the denomination, there was a drop in emphasis on the basic tenets of the Brethren in Christ. Secondly, the new *Jubilee* curriculum provides an excellent opportunity to expose both Sunday school students and the adults who teach them to teaching and stories from a Brethren in Christ/Anabaptist perspective as opposed to the theology espoused by the publishing houses mentioned by Keefer. Happily, approximately forty percent of our churches are using the curriculum. Sadly, sixty percent are *not* taking advantage of this wealth of material.

Leonard Chester and Naomi Stambaugh called for a return to a traditional Brethren in Christ emphasis on reconciliation following the model set forth in Matthew 18. Chester sadly noted that the easier route of "church-hopping" is today too often chosen over investing effort in conciliation. I was intrigued by two of Chester's assertions: (1) that North Americans view discipleship as an unattainable *ideal* whereas we should emphasize the norm—the place where most believers are—and that discipleship is accessible; (2) that unlike past Brethren in Christ, most Christians today believe that the Holy Spirit can change outward habits/behaviors, but don't believe that the Spirit, as a holiness teacher, can change our *inner* beings.

Finally, some of the speakers spoke

with admiration and even longing for the sense of community experienced by the early Brethren in Christ. Stambaugh in particular lamented what she sees as a lack of intentional community. (I will note here that I appreciated Stambaugh's use of "community" and "family" in place of the otherwise omnipresent "*brotherhood*" and "*brothers*" with speakers occasionally adding "*and sisters*" as an obvious afterthought.) Stambaugh's yearning for intentional community caused a time of warm, personal reflection about my present church in which I have observed and experienced members holding each other accountable—even at times in sensitive areas such as personal finance and sexual sins. On a regular basis I see examples of helping those outside the

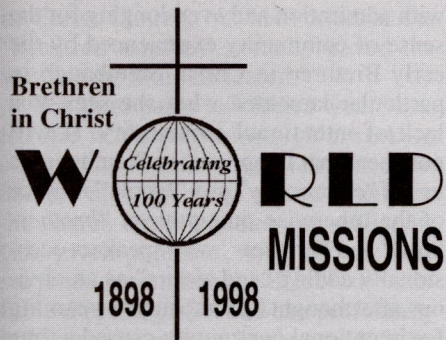
I think we should take seriously Dan Chamberlain's closing recommendations that we: allow the Spirit to lead us; be ourselves and build upon the strengths of who we are (volunteerism, stewardship, peace, and reconciliation); and spend more money on what makes us unique.

church as well as mutual aid through group house-roofings, assistance in times of crisis, and ongoing support of parts of our body that are hurting. As Chester suggests, discipleship and leading a holy life are ideals, but we are capable of working on them *now*. I like the sense of community that caused a relative newcomer to my church—after hearing about a group working on a member's house—to ask, "How can I get in on this?"

I think we should take seriously Dan Chamberlain's closing recommendations that we: allow the Spirit to lead us; be ourselves and build upon the strengths of who we are (volunteerism, stewardship, peace, and reconciliation); and spend more money on what makes us unique. In addition, Chamberlain emphasized, we should not be carried away by the church growth movement. We need to establish our own agenda—as opposed to that of the "radical reformed right."

The first Brethren in Christ Study Conference is over. I learned, reflected, and worshipped. I am ready to sign up for study conference number two.

Beth Hostetler Mark is member of the Grantham, Pa., congregation.



When Jatha

I sat bewildered and alone in our camp quarters near Khanua Village in North Bihar, India, after seeing Aunt Nellie Dick off for Banmankhi by oxcart. She carried a letter for my husband in which I had written, "Don't come, Allen...not until you hear from us again. It's not safe. Aunt Nellie will give you particulars."

It was April 1950, Tuesday of Passion Week. On this sizzling hot morning, my senior missionary and companion for the past month's tour had decided to go home. "I must get ready for Easter, Leoda," she had said. I nodded numbly, not finding it in my heart to express what I knew to be true—I couldn't go yet.

We had come to the village of Khanua with such high hopes! This was my first tour among Santals, and instead of following former evangelistic patterns of working one-on-one or with small groups, our resident church planter, Benjamin Marandi, and I combined our efforts to give the entire community a consecutive witness and exposure to the Life of Christ.

For over three weeks the villagers came en masse to hear the gospel preached by the white-haired, converted witch doctor. To aid Benjamin, I used flannelgraph figures on a board lighted by a hissing gas lamp. Music preceded each message, with his violin and my accordion accompanying the Santal lyrics that several young men had learned when Benjamin taught them to read and sing from his well-worn hymnbook.

We met friendliness during our day contacts, but at night people seemed wary and tentative. Attendees squatted on the ground, seeking anonymity in his or her cotton shawl. Silently they came, and as silently left, but we knew that each had heard the gospel in San-

tali, their mother tongue. We hoped and kept praying for a breakthrough, particularly among those who aided us in singing.

On Palm Sunday morning, many villagers trod the well-worn path across an open field to the mission schoolhouse where Allen preached in Hindi with Benjamin's daughter, Dina, interpreting into Santali. Benjamin had gone to a neighboring village for the day, and Allen and Joanne, our four-year-old, had followed their usual pattern of spending Sundays with us. Joanne, already a prime favorite in the village, sat with me while her daddy preached.

The day progressed to a climax in the late afternoon when one of the young men, Jatha Murmu, requested baptism. We tried to persuade him to wait until Easter, but he was adamant. "Look," he said, "my father can't stop me, but you Christians can. I've already moved my clothes and belongings into the oxshed at home. I've spread my mat for tonight, and I expect to be baptized today. My family may kill me, but I don't care! I've promised the Lord Jesus to obey him and be baptized today."

His sense of urgency overrode the fact that we were doing something new in allowing any applicant to choose his or her baptismal day. Allen finally com-

plied, and the entire village watched this water rite in the nearby stream. All watched, but none showed inner feelings. Not until Allen and Joanne rode off into the darkness on the motorcycle did bedlam break loose in the village.

We heard the incessant beating of drums throughout the night. Next morning a large delegation left to worship the evil spirits called "bongas" and their master, Satan. The villagers felt that Jatha had turned traitor to his Santal heritage by becoming a Christian. Surely he imperiled the whole community!

Khanua's irate village chief convened his council by Monday noon and declared excommunication to any who dared visit the mission compound. But despite his father's orders, Pradhan, the chief's eldest being one of the young men Benjamin had tutored, stole over that night to tell us how matters lay. We six Christians were having evening worship in Benjamin's house.

From Pradhan we learned that Jatha, now named Daniel, was doing well. True, his angry father had disowned him, but his mother had come after midnight bearing enough food to sustain her son. Why? She also believed, as did half the village! We rejoiced, and after prayer, left the matter in God's hands.

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dared to be Daniel

by Leoda Buckwalter

Next morning, Aunt Nellie left. Why should I remain? My heart cried out for my husband and daughter, but the Lord's hand laid heavily on me to stay. Bewildered and alone, I agonized in prayer on that Tuesday morning in Khanua. Had I missed God's cue? His directive had seemed so clear: to go to Khanua and teach the entire village the Life of Christ series through Benjamin. It had all seemed so right.

And now? All we could do was pray. Would Jatha hold out? What verdict would the council give on his case? This would set patterns for the future.

The week dragged on. When Good Friday came, the five of us met for service in Benjamin's house. Somehow it had become holy ground. Benjamin preached, his face aglow. "Isn't God good?" he asked. "We don't have to work up to victory. Our Jesus won it on the cross! He conquered Satan on the cross! So, all this week we have rested in that victory and enjoyed sweet fellowship with him and with each other." He turned to me and asked, "Memsahib, do you know what the battle in the village is all about?"

"I know they're trying to decide Daniel's fate," I said.

This white-haired preacher chuckled, then replied, "The council is about equally divided, since all came to the meetings. Believers are asking unbelievers how they can throw someone out when he's already left of his own choosing. That's quite a question..."

The meeting continued, but within a few minutes Pradhan burst in exclaiming, "The Lord won! I told you he would! The Lord won!"

We crowded around as he continued, "Listen to the verdict: 'We cannot excommunicate Jatha Murmu. He has voluntarily chosen to become a Christian. As an adult, he is free to do so and

remains a member of the Santal community.'"

Miriam danced for joy while Dina and Martha wept quietly. The converted witch doctor and the young man worshiped the Lord. Benjamin's hands lifted high in priestly fashion. I wiped tears of joy and when all of us had become quiet, I said, "Benjamin, this is a new day. Daniel forced this decision by staying in the village after being baptized. This is good."

"Patras did it in Dharkola," he answered, "and now, Daniel."

I drew a deep breath. "The church has taken root," I said. It will grow, Benjamin. Our victorious Lord will build it."

"Yes, Memsahib."

The next day I returned home to spend a quiet Easter with my family, but as we were having afternoon tea, Pradhan walked up to our grass thatch house and handed my husband a note. "From Pastor Benjamin," he said with a wide grin. Allen read: "Sahib Ji, please come immediately to baptize a mother and daughter from Jhungi Village. They want to be baptized today."

"Let's go, Pradhan," Allen said with a grin, and five minutes later the sound of the motorcycle filled the afternoon quiet.

ALMOST FORTY YEARS LATER, Allen and I walked those same grounds in Banmankhi when we attended the Platinum Jubilee meetings for the Brethren in Christ Church in India. We spent an unforgettable week reminiscing.

No missionaries had resided here for about fifteen years. Where only eight Santals had been Christians in this district when Aunt Nellie and I toured in Khanua, now over 1,600 delegates had flooded in, 1,300 of them tribals! These

meetings were planned by an entirely Indian leadership, and they did a splendid job. I wrote in my journal:

"We're enjoying the expertise with which these second generation Christian leaders are fulfilling their responsibilities. Moses Marandi, the son of Pradhan (who changed his name to Stephen at baptism), now chairs the Church Board and these meetings. Samuel Hembrom, son of Patras—another of the 'prophets,' as we called the initial seven whom we trained—is Executive Director. Yes, Stephen and Patras are here, as well as Daniel, Dina, and Philip. Philip's church is the fastest growing congregation in the area. He's one of the original seven."

The meetings concluded with about a hundred Santals staying an extra night to facilitate walking home by daylight. I sat on the bungalow veranda and wrote:

"All have gone, even the Santals. They spent hours singing last night. It sounded heavenly to me. One familiar Santal lyric after another stirs our memories, their soft voices modulating the unique six-tone scale. Santals are quiet—not lethargic, rather, deeply sensitive to spiritual things..."

"Well, Moses told me this morning that his people, the Santals, sang until way past midnight. They concluded by dancing unto the Lord. I wish I had seen it. Years ago we held the first Bible School session on this compound. Only about two dozen had accepted the Lord, all Santals. Study of God's Word seemed a precious privilege, days during which they gained stamina to withstand the persecution at home, even the threat of death.

"On the last night the men worshiped in exaltation outside their quarters. Suddenly, at a given signal, all the men and boys rose and with slow rhythmic motion, they danced before the Lord. Allen and I watched from this very veranda... Well, it happened again last night. I'm sure the Lord of glory was pleased.

"Somehow the years fall away in this particular setting, at this particular time. He surely is building his church!"

*Allen and Leoda Buckwalter live in Elizabethtown, Pa. Her latest book about their missions experiences in India, **Confessions of a Hybrid**, will be released later this month.*

I was born on one of the more than 7,000 islands of the Philippines.

It was a small fishing island near Taiwan, 20 miles long and 3 or 4 miles wide. This small island was not able to support all the families that lived on it, so when I was very young my father left in search of work. After some time my mom heard news that dad had died, and so she remarried. My new father was an alcoholic and never really treated me and or my siblings with any respect. Because I was the oldest, I bore the brunt of his anger and neglect.

The government gave opportunity to the families on the small northern islands to move to the southern island of Mindanao and pursue agriculture instead of fishing. My family moved, and soon we were raising vegetables for sale. A favorite customer was a woman missionary who lived just two or three miles from our home. This missionary would always buy the produce at twice the asking price. She also gained our attention by telling Bible stories, singing choruses, and having us memorize Scripture. During our visits she gave a lollipop to each of us. The lollipops served as a drawing card because they

were not a common item among most of the children in the village. The missionary's warm home often served as a joyful resting spot for me and my siblings amidst the brokenness that was the norm at home.

The extent of my parents' faith was the prayer altar to Mary in our home. Every day all of us except

my stepfather prayed at this altar. When my mother became sick with tuberculosis, she would go and see the missionary doctors who came every three months to the clinic. While at the clinic my mom heard the gospel, but I do not know if she ever believed in it.

My mother later died, leaving the five of us in the care of our stepfather. Because of my stepfather's drinking habits, there was little or no money for food, and so I was faced with getting food for my brother and sisters. My mom knew before she died that her husband wouldn't be able to care for us, and so she talked to me about what to do. She said that I could go back to our original home island and stay there with friends, or I could go to the missionary's home. She must have talked with the missionary about this when she visited the clinic.

At age eleven, I often went to Protestant Sunday school with my siblings. When my father found this out, he strongly forbade it and beat us all for going to church.

So I often took the brunt of the punishment, and one day I ran to the home of the missionary to ask for help. As this became a recurring event, the missionary sent me with a friend to a Christian home in the jungle. At the age of twelve, my friend and I left at 4:00 in the morning with food and two horses on a one-day journey to this new home. Once there, I worked for the family and was treated kindly. But things were to change again soon.

Only a couple of weeks passed, and one night my stepfather came and dragged me back to his new home. I was forced to



Gary and Mel Andricks and family

leave in the arms of my drunken stepfather with no shoes, extra clothing, or food. The journey home consisted of blundering through a dark jungle and over some very rough terrain. Upon my return, I became the "mother" of my four siblings. For two years I cared for my family as we went to school. I don't remember how we managed to take care of my youngest brother.

The Filipino Christian family with whom I had stayed earlier must have been trying to keep track of me, because one day they showed up and were surprised to find me still with my father. I ended up leaving with them. I just left. While I packed my clothes, my sisters kept asking me what I was doing. I went with the Christian family to another island and they changed my name. I stayed with this new "family" for four years.

During my time there I went back a number of times to find my sisters. It was only my sisters, because my brother had died. People said he had been walking toward the spirit tree and he died. I didn't find my sisters in my searches, for they had been moved to another town, so I was alone. The only people I knew were the Christian family that I was living with. During this four-year period I was disciplined by my pastor. Throughout this time I learned what following Christ was all about.

I spent the next four years working as a nursing assistant. While I was doing this, I met the doctor who had treated my mom when she had TB. Here I was, hundreds of miles from my old home, and I met the doctor who had treated my mom! I also went out with the outreach teams to villages on Wednesday and weekends to speak about the gospel. Together we planted twelve churches.

During my fourth year of being a nursing assistant, I told my supervisor that I wanted to go to Bible School. She told me I couldn't go because I had no money, no official papers (birth certificate, social security number), no way of proving how old I was, no family support, and most of all, no proper education. My co-workers also advised me not to go. But my pastor suggested that I take a placement test to see how well I would do. I did that, and he was encouraged by my score. So I nervously went to the registrar's office and tried to apply. They said I

needed recommendations, proper papers, and my parents' permission—none of which I had.

Nevertheless I went to the president's office. This was scary. My pastor knew the president, and because of my scores on the test, I was given a chance. I would not get a diploma because I had not graduated from high school, but I could attend for four years and learn, as long as I could pay. For the first two years I prayed often and my expenses were paid by anonymous donors. Many times I would find food and clothes on my bed when I went back to my room. I had no money to buy the necessities, so I would borrow other peoples' soap and toothpaste while we were in the washroom together.

In my third year, just before final exams, I had to pay all my overdue bills. "No money, no exams" was what I was told. I waited for two weeks, but no money came. So I was strongly advised by the Dean of Women to pack my bags and prepare to leave. But I had nowhere to go. I had no money for transportation and no home to go to. I became very distraught and overwhelmed. Just then a friend came in and told me that someone had paid my bills. I did not believe her. I was so depressed that I could not completely comprehend what she had said. But the fact was that I could stay.

While I was a third-year student, Gary came to study for a year. We both had a heart for missions and he became a special friend to me. At the end of the school year we were married. Together we went to study at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

The Lord is faithful. Three years ago I finally found my three younger sisters, after 22 years. I also met my real biological father whom I had never known. The report of his death had been untrue and he had remarried. All together I have fifteen siblings, of which I am the oldest. I thank the Lord for this discovery and for the many other blessings God has provided over the years.

Gary and Mel Andricks have been on furlough and study leave from their assignment in Malawi with Brethren in Christ World Missions. Matthew Bye is a Brethren in Christ student at Ashland Theological Seminary. This testimony was prepared as an assignment for Introduction to Missions Class taught by Grace Holland.

WORLD HUNGER FUNDS—COLOMBIA

La Calzada project report

by Nancy Peterman, on behalf of Sonia Valencia

Greetings and encouragement in the name of Jesus! I'm writing this letter on behalf of Sonia Valencia and the "Luz y Vida" ("Light and Life") School, to express appreciation for the blessing your support has been. We'd also like to take this opportunity to account for the funds received during 1995. Although detailed records have been kept here, we think it will suffice to explain in general how the World Hunger Funds have been put to use.

The school was started by Youth With a Mission as an alternative educational facility for many of the children under their care, whose past life on the streets has left after affects which continue to impact their academic level, attention spans, and behavior. Because of the similar needs of children from the "La Calzada" sector, a depressed area where a Brethren in Christ Church and social ministry are being developed, and because of our close working relationship with YWAM, it was logical to gradually channel La Calzada children into the school. At present, 18 of the 30 students are from La Calzada. In the "Light and Life" school, the children are receiving personalized academic help in relatively small classes of 6-8 students. As well, they are helped nutritionally with one solid noonday meal and several nutritious snacks. For those coming from the La Calzada sector, this may well be the only substantial food received during the day. Although the parents or guardians do not pay for the child's education, they are responsible for transporting the students to and from school, either by public transportation or a very long walk (25-30 blocks).

During 1995, \$300.00 (U.S.) per month in World Hunger Funds were received for the 18 Brethren in Christ children from La Calzada. Of these funds, approximately 90 percent was spent for food items and 10 percent was used for prescription medicines.

During many critical periods of 1995, when YWAM funds "dried up," the World Hunger Fund support was the only fixed source of income and was often miraculously multiplied and stretched to provide as well for the other 12 students and for seven Colombian Christian teachers who work at the school without salary. That has meant a "bare bones" food budget, usually without meat, but with protein—rich grains and legumes. The meals have also recently been supplemented by damaged fruits and vegetables donated by a city supermarket.

Although we have been living day by day by faith, the school year (Feb. to Dec.) is close to completion, with God's faithful provision—of which you have been a part. The continuity of attention and nutritional support has worked dramatic changes in the kids' lives, with a big difference in attitudes, conduct and physical growth. We expect that in the coming school year, four of the children will "graduate" from the specialized schooling and be able to enter a "normal" school.

Needless to say, we would solicit your continued prayers and support for the ministry in 1996, as it continues and by faith even expands to provide for new students. If it would be possible to receive World Hunger Funds again, it would be immensely appreciated.

God at work in our world

Tribute

To Esther Spurrier—Volunteer, Brethren in Christ World Missions

God has been working through the life of Esther Spurrier as a volunteer for Brethren in Christ World Missions. Esther has served the missions in numerous capacities for several years. She has been the editor of "God at work in our world." She has been a faithful servant through the highs and lows of life. She has given of her time, talents, and energy when seemingly there was no more to give. Esther's gifts, insights, and sensitivity to the task of missions journalism will be missed. Brethren in Christ World Missions compliments Esther for a job well done. We thank her for the ministry received by the mission, the denomination, and most importantly, Jesus Christ and his church. We pray that God will continue to provide her with grace gifts which she will employ for the advancement of his kingdom. Thank you, Esther, and God bless you!

A day in the life of the Bundys

Bruce and Merly Bundy—Madrid, Spain

We start our Sunday service at 12:00 noon. As I looked at my watch, it was 12:15 and we were only six. Our usual attendance is around 12-15, so things were really low. Here we are on Thanksgiving Sunday, and after hours of preparation for this day, only six have shown up? Well...this is a day of special thanks to the Lord, so we will thank him, no matter how many we are.

Brethren in Christ World Missions has an urgent need for a teacher for four to six children of missionaries in Zimbabwe. The assignment would begin September 1996 and run for six months to one year, to fill in during the present teacher's furlough and to assist her upon her return. For more information, contact Brethren in Christ World Missions, P.O. Box 390, Grantham, PA 17027-0390; phone (717) 697-2634.

During our time of singing and praise, a couple of people straggled in, then a few more, and still more, until by the end of the sermon, there were 30 of us in our living room. By the time our special meal started, we ended up being 37 people plus a newborn! Wow!

Here are a few of the people who came:

Alfredo and Carmen, our landlord and his wife. They came with their daughter Elena (13). They enjoyed the meal and the fellowship. As Elena put it, "I have never experienced anything like this before, and I would like to come back." I wonder what they thought of 37 people in our living room!

Roman and Isabel, the Cuban family who is struggling to make ends meet here in Madrid. They came with their two children and some Spanish friends of theirs, Jose and Mabi and their child Jose Jr. This was the first Sunday service for any of them to attend.

Olga brought her friend Marielena, who has been having problems with depression lately. She also brought Carmen (first time to attend a Sunday service). Carmen, her cousin who has been trying to get her *not* to attend the church, is also an apartment mate with Karina! Carmen has been angry with God for several reasons and is trying to deny his existence. Pray that Carmen will get headed back toward God, especially through the example of her cousin, and other friends who attend our church.

Jimmy and Paty (and baby Manolo) brought their two Brazilian friends, Sandra and Madali. They were also in our house group on Tuesday. Both have just returned to Spain for a second time and thanked the Lord.

(Of all the people last Sunday, 8 were children! There were 8 countries represented. And there were 8 Spaniards.)

Work team fruit

Nathan and Cathy Bert—Managua, Nicaragua

Our last work group came down the beginning of October. They worked hard at building a church and a close relationship with their Nicaraguan brothers and sisters. After two weeks, all the walls were put up and the roof was ready to be put on. Two weeks later, the roof was

finished by members of the Buenos Aires congregation and they were able to worship in their church building. One of the very positive outcomes of these work groups is that the Nicaraguan members are usually so encouraged by their North American brothers and sisters, they work harder after the group leaves to finish the church. We praise God for both nationalities that are willing to work together side by side to further the kingdom of God. To have North American people come and live in very simple conditions and work very hard is such a good testimony to the people who live close to the church but do not attend.

Window on ministry

Rich and Kathy Stuebing—Theological College of Central Africa (TCCA)

A few weeks ago we received a phone call from a woman who had been in our Christian Marriage class for the community in January to March of 1995. She told us that she had become a Christian as a result of that class and was being baptized the following day at Ndola Baptist Church. We quickly made plans to attend that service which proved a real blessing to us.

We were greeted at the door by a man who told us that Kathy was responsible for his salvation in her religious education classes 18 years ago. We then sat beside a man, now in educational publishing, with whom we had worked in the Christian student group when he was at university years ago in Lusaka. The pastor, a recent TCCA graduate, preached a very effective sermon in which he used his training well.

Afterwards, we were greeted by many friends from our days of student work in Lusaka, with one woman especially mentioning the continuing encouragement to her of our consistent witness over the years and continuing in the present. The newly-baptized woman had her husband take a picture of her with us, so we now have a photo to help us remember that day and praise the Lord for his faithfulness to us. This all happened during a very busy time for us and was a wonderful encouragement, reminding us of God's many promises that we will reap as we persevere in following him.

Messiah Village earns Moody bond rating

Messiah Village recently became the second continuing care retirement community in Pennsylvania and the fourth in the nation to receive an investment grade rating for its mortgage reserve bonds from Moody's Investors Service, Inc.

"Moody's, a world leader in independent credit research service, has not generally rated single-site, continuing care retirement communities," Messiah Village President Dr. Emerson Leshner said. "The result for Messiah Village is a substantial lowering of the cost of our debt service."

"The bond rating validates the Vil-

lage's financial health and underscores the strength of its management team," Leshner continued. "It testifies to the vision and management skills of former and current board members, of Robert Fry, our Vice President of Operations, and finance consultant John Finley."

Messiah Village, located near Mechanicsburg, is owned and operated by the Brethren in Christ Church. Originally established in Harrisburg in 1896, the Village will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year.

The rating was issued after an extensive credit analysis which included an on-site visit by representatives of Moody's. "As a result of the Moody's rating, which confirmed the investment-grade value of Messiah Village, we were able to market the Village's bonds at interest rates generally thought to be unheard of in this industry," said Jay Wenger, Vice Presi-

dent of Hopper Soliday & Co., Inc., Lancaster, Pa.

Currently Messiah Village includes 277 independent living residents, 171 assisted-living residents, and a 194-bed skilled nursing facility with 53 beds assigned to a special Alzheimer's care unit. The Village also provides home care, operates an on-site adult day care center, and sponsors a children's day care center featuring numerous intergenerational activities.

"Our goal is to make sure that the Village's financial resources and management expertise enable us to fulfill our mission of ministering to older adults even more effectively," Leshner said.

"This is certainly a highlight in the financial history of the Village," Robert Fry, Vice President of Operations said. "We thank the Lord for it."

Churches promote fasting and prayer

by Harvey R. Sider

Thank the Lord for a growing participation in fasting and prayer during the first week of the year. Many congregations promoted the challenge and call to prayer and fasting in their bulletins. The reports from leaders and laity who participated are very encouraging.

Five specific examples are representative of the flavor and variety of ways that churches became part of a serious call to prayer and fasting.

About 200 people from the *Elizabethtown* (Pa.) congregation met Wednesday evening January 3 for a two-hour concert of prayer. All other activities for the evening were can-

celled. Both pastoral staff and lay people provided leadership in worship and working through the seven R's of a concert of prayer. Taking prayer seriously is undoubtedly one reason Pastor Hall could report to the congregation an exciting growth pattern in attendance over the past three years: 1993-352, 1994-388, 1995-438.

The *Ashland* (Ohio) congregation encouraged people to participate in a "one-week adventure." An eight-day outline was provided for December 31 to January 7. During the first four days, ideas were given on how people could spend time alone reflecting on specific areas, followed by discussion and then an encouragement to fasting one meal a day to pray about these issues. The last four days, the focus was on prayer for identified needs and individuals. In addition, everyone was invited to attend a Thursday noon prayer fast at the church.

The prayer committee of the *New Guilford* (Pa.) church gave leadership to this congregation's week of fasting and prayer. A prayer sheet enabled people to sign up for involvement in prayer and fasting during a meal on one of three days. Information on specific requests, locally and denominationally, was provided to assist persons in their prayer fast time so that

they could intercede with greater understanding.

The pastor of the *Falls View* (Ont.) congregation gave direction to two events. Every noon from Tuesday through Saturday and every evening, Tuesday through Sunday, concerned people gathered for prayer. This year, rather than incorporate devotional thoughts, Pastor Deardorff led his people in times of directed prayer. It is noteworthy that the pastor set the pace by participating in 10 of the 11 prayer times.

On December 31, Pastor Norman of *Abilene* (Ks.) prepared his congregation to participate in a Sunday morning concert of prayer the following week by an appropriate message and instructions of what to expect. The concert of prayer then included a brief time of celebration and a short devotional, but most of the worship hour was given to directed prayer using the basic concert of prayer format.

Surely God will honor such commitment to him when we set aside time to seek his face and his way of working in the lives of individuals and of the church.

Harvey R. Sider is Moderator of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Church News

Allegheny Conference

On Dec. 27 Mervin and Ruth Potteiger spoke to the **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., about their experiences in Romania. ♦ The **Canoe Creek** congregation, Hollidaysburg, Pa., had a white elephant exchange as part of their Dec. 7 Christmas dinner at Scotch Valley Grange. ♦ The **Chambersburg** church had a caroling event on Dec. 20. ♦ On Dec. 21-23, the **Fairview Ave.** congregation, Waynesboro, Pa., hosted a "Journey Through the Christmas Story"—a dramatized 25-minute trip to the manger. ♦ The **Five Forks** church, Waynesboro, had a farewell party Dec. 20 for Randy and Kim Eberly, leaving to serve in Mexico. ♦ On Dec. 3 the **Martinsburg**, Pa., church enjoyed a harp concert by Mary Lauver. ♦ The **South Mountain** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa., planned nursing home visits for Dec. 7, 14.

Atlantic Conference

The Choraleers from Lancaster gave a concert Jan. 14 for the **Conoy** congregation, Elizabethtown, Pa. ♦ The **Cross Roads** church, Mount Joy, Pa., had their 19th annual live nativity Dec. 16-17, 22-23. ♦ The **Elizabethtown** congregation received 10 new members on Dec. 3. ♦ On Dec. 3, 12 persons were baptized into the fellowship of the **Fair-**

land congregation, Cleona, Pa. The Christmas Eve offering went to Campus Crusade to fund the Jesus film project. ♦ The youth of the **Free Grace** congregation, Millersburg, Pa., hosted a Dec. 9 "love auction" to raise money for their trip to Mexico. ♦ The **Lancaster**, Pa., church planned all-church roller skating for Dec. 6.

New 1996 staff for the **Manor** church, Mountville, Pa., are Pat Getz, director of children's ministry; and Roanne Funk, director of discipleship and small groups. ♦ The **Millersville**, Pa., congregation had a December sub sale to help with Missy Nissly's trip to Nigeria. ♦ On Dec. 16 the **Montoursville**, Pa., church planned cookie packaging and caroling. The Sunday school offering provided gifts for children of prisoners through the Angel Tree Project. ♦ The **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa., had a Dec. 20 candlelight communion service. ♦ On Dec. 31 the Phil Shenk family shared about their upcoming trip to Russia.

The **New Hope** church, Harrisburg, Pa., reports that seven FOCUS small groups are now meeting. ♦ The choir, preschoolers, and jr. church children took part in the Dec. 17 service of the **New Joy** church, Akron, Pa. ♦ The women of the **Palmyra**, Pa., church caroled at Twin Oaks Nursing Home on Dec.

14, followed by a cookie exchange. ♦ The bell choir of the **Pequea**, Pa., church performed in December for the **Marsh Creek** church. ♦ The men's fellowship of the **Refton**, Pa., church collected blankets in December for Water Street Rescue Mission and CAP.

On Dec. 24 the live nativity participants from the **Silverdale**, Pa., church moved inside for a candlelighting service. ♦ The **Skyline View** congregation, Harrisburg, Pa., planned caroling and snacks for Dec. 17. ♦ The secret sisters of the **Speedwell Heights** congregation, Lititz, Pa., enjoyed a breakfast on Dec. 9. ♦ Scott Stutzman was the Dec. 31 guest speaker for the **Summit View** congregation, New Holland, Pa., on the subject, "Pressing Onward."

Canadian Conference

Darynn Colp was installed as new pastor of the **Boyle** church, St. Ann's, Ont., on Jan. 7. ♦ Bishop Shaw was guest speaker Dec. 3 for the **Bridlewood** congregation, Agincourt, Ont. The young people's Christmas dinner was Dec. 8. ♦ Joyce Rolston spoke on "Silver Boxes" at the Dec. 12 ladies' tea of the **Cross Roads** church, Guelph, Ont. ♦ The senior youth of the **Delisle**, Sask., church enjoyed tobogganing and an overnighter in December. ♦ The

sharing of old family Christmas pictures was the highlight of the Dec. 9 turkey dinner fellowship of the **Heise Hill** church, Gormley, Ont.

In cooperation with several businesses, the **Kingswood** congregation, Barrie, Ont., provided a "drop 'n' shop" child care service on Dec. 16. ♦ The Master's Four sang at the Dec. 17 Christmas banquet of the **New Life** congregation, Collingwood, Ont. ♦ Image Puppet Products entertained during the Dec. 31 morning service of the **Orchard Creek** church, St. Ann's, Ont. Lunch followed. ♦ The **Port Colborne**, Ont., church planned a New Year's Eve carry-in meal and talent show. ♦ The **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont., welcomed six new members on Nov. 26.

Pastor Main of the **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., preached a December series on "An Extraordinary Christmas for Ordinary People." ♦ The **Sherkston**, Ont., congregation was invited to a New Year's Eve buffet at the parsonage. ♦ The **Springvale**, Ont., church received 12 new members in December. ♦ The film "The Radicals" was shown in the Sunday school hours Dec. 10, 17 at the **Stayner**, Ont., church. ♦ The **Upper Oaks** congregation, Oakville, Ont., planned a winter retreat for Jan. 5-7 at Muskoka Baptist Center. ♦ Paul Kiss was the speaker for 70 youth who attended the Dec. 8 Christmas banquet at the **Westheights** church, Kitchener, Ont.

Central Conference

The **Beulah Chapel** congregation, Springfield, Ohio, had a Dec. 6 MPF auction with proceeds of almost \$300 going to missions. ♦ Rick Kline was the Dec. 31 guest speaker for the **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind. ♦ President of Messiah College, Rodney Sawatsky, spoke Dec. 10 to the **Fairview** congregation, Englewood, Ohio. ♦ The exchange of a tree ornament among families was the highlight of the Dec. 2 Christmas dinner of the **Lakeview** church,

Correspondents: Was your New Year's resolution to get your bulletins and news in on time: the first of each month? February news reports for the April issue are due on March 1.

Christmas Musicals and Drama

Each year as we read through bulletins, it is obvious that congregations spend much talent and time spreading the good news of Christmas through music and drama. Here is a listing of the titles of December programs reported to us.

Allegheny Conference

Air Hill—"Good News of Great Joy"
Canoe Creek—"The Greatest Gift"
Five Forks—"Three Wee Kings" and "In All of His Glory"
Hollowell—"Through the Eyes of the Friendly Beasts" and "Bethlehem's Light"
Martinsburg—"Make Room for Christmas"

Atlantic Conference

Conoy—"A Christmas Gathering"
Cross Roads—"Celebrate Christ's Birth" and "Christmas Crossroads"
Free Grace—"Great Day"
Lancaster—"What Is Possible?" and "Christmas Crossroads"
Manor—"The King, The Long-Awaited Promise"
Mastersonville—"No Phibbin' Mephibosheth, It's Christmas!"

Mt. Pleasant—"An Old-Fashioned Christmas"
New Covenant—"The Crippled Lamb"
New Hope—"Through the Eyes of the Friendly Beasts"
Palmyra—"Call Him Jesus"
Pequea—"A Promise Kept"
Refton—"Christmas Crossroads"
Summit View—"Celebrate the Light"

Canadian Conference

Heise Hill—"Christmas Comes to Lone Star Gulch"
Oak Ridges—"Glory to God in the Highest"
Ridgemount—"Buster, Come Home!"
Rosebank—"Tis the Season"
Sherkston—"Journey to the Center of Christmas"

Pacific Conference

Chino—"The City of Lights"

Susquehanna Conference

Carlisle—"Call His Name Jesus" and "Hark, the Herald Angel"
Cedar Grove—"No Ordinary Night"
Jemison Valley—"King Forever"
Marsh Creek—"Will You Come to the Manger?"
West Shore—"Simple Gifts of Christmas" and "The Gift of Christmas"

Goodrich, Mich. ♦ Rev. and Mrs. Wesley Childs were commissioned in Dayton on Jan. 7 to lead a church planting in **Lebanon, Ohio**.

The **Mooretown** congregation, Sandusky, Mich., had a New Year's Eve testimony service followed by a party at the parsonage with hotdogs, sauerkraut, games, and snacks. ♦ The **Morrison, Ill.**, church reports that their sanctuary remodeling is finished. Church decorating on Dec. 10 centered around an angels theme. ♦ On Dec. 20, Susan Pierce spoke to the **Nappanee, Ind.**, congregation about her experiences in Kenya through Messiah College. ♦ The **Northgate** church, Tipp City, Ohio, had a Dec. 31 watchnight service and fellowship. ♦ The **Pleasant Hill, Ohio**, congregation planned caroling and fruit basket delivery for Dec. 17.

Midwest Conference

"Skyar and Rick" entertained at the Dec. 13 Christmas party of the **Rosebank** congregation, Hope, Kan. A secret sisters get-together was planned for Dec. 11. ♦ The **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Kan., welcomed five new members on Dec. 10.

Pacific Conference

Bishop Hawbaker was guest speaker at the Dec. 10 service of the **Pacific Highway** congregation, Salem, Ore. ♦ The **Upland, Calif.**, church saw the video "Race for Life" on the evening of Dec. 10 about the Iditarod dogsled race. Isaku Fujita was in concert Jan. 7.

Southeast Conference

Tina Mangiardi was speaker at the Christmas banquet Dec. 9 of the **Community Bible** church, Sarasota, Fla., at Harley Sandcastle. ♦ In December the children of the **Grace Community** church, Lawrenceville, Ga., gathered and sent basic care packages to overseas missionaries. Guest speaker Dec. 24 was Joseph George on "What Does Christmas Mean to You?" ♦ On Dec. 24 the **Millerfield's** church, Columbia, Ky., held a dedication service for the library donated in memory of Gertie Shepherd. ♦ Gary and Mel Andricks, missionaries from Malawi, were Dec. 3 guests of the **Winchester, Va.**, congregation.

Susquehanna Conference

The Big Valley Men's Chorus was in concert Dec. 10 at the **Big Valley** church, Belleville, Pa. ♦ The **Carlisle, Pa.**, church has started an organ fund with a goal of \$15,000. New staff for 1996 are Robert Collier, associate pastor; and Jane

Beachy, director of young adult ministries. ♦ The Dec. 6 women's meeting of the **Cedar Grove** church, Mifflintown, Pa., included five-minute show 'n' tells on Christmas traditions and activities. ♦ The **Grantham, Pa.**, church hosted the Dec. 11 meeting of the Grantham Women's Club with Vivian Harvey showing her nativity sets collection, and a silent auction. Karen Durbin has been named new Minister of Music. ♦ The **Hanover, Pa.**, church enjoyed a Dec. 10 concert by Chris Cowgill.

The **Jemison Valley** congregation, Westfield, Pa., had their live nativity Dec. 15-17. ♦ The goal of the New Year's Eve dinner concert at the **Mechanicsburg, Pa.**, church was to raise \$5,000 to build a church in India. ♦ Guest Sunday school teacher on Dec. 10 for the **Messiah Village** congregation, Mechanicsburg, was Marion Heisey from New Mexico. The church welcomed seven new members Dec. 17. ♦ The **Redland Valley** church, York Haven, Pa., had a dedication banquet for their new activity center on Dec. 23. The Christmas offering goal was \$5,000 to pay for the center's new equipment. ♦ The **Roseglen** church, Duncannon, Pa., took part in the Messiah Village stocking stuffer project. ♦ Dr. and Mrs. E. Morris Sider were speakers at the family Christmas dinner of the **West Shore** church, Mechanicsburg, at New Kingston Fire Hall.

For The Record

Births

Aldinger: Skyler Douglas Yale, Dec. 2, 1995; Anthony and Susan (Julian) Aldinger, Manor congregation, Pa.

Cashell: Chase Meyers, Dec. 9, 1995; Paul and Nadene (Meyers) Cashell, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Child: Brian Joshua, Nov. 14, 1995; Randy and Suzy Child, Walnut Valley congregation, Calif.

Clark: Joshua Michael, Dec. 13, 1995; David and Dawn (Funk) Clark, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Fokkens: Hanna Anita Liska, Dec. 5; Matt and Heleen Fokkens, Port Colborne congregation, Ont.

Godshall: Micah Ryan, Nov. 14, 1995; Steven and Kristin (Althouse) Godshall, New Covenant congregation, Pa.

Heine: Carissa Noel, Dec. 30,

E.V. Timelines

100 Years Ago

February 15, 1896—Commenting about the need for the church to make workers available for missions assignments, J. R. Zook writes: "I believe the church has always meant to be unselfish, and I have high regards for her; but probably she has been a little unthoughtful on this subject. To illustrate: here is a district that needs two ministers and that is all; there are other Brethren who are gifted and convicted to teach the Word. The district looks no further than her local needs. And the church in general has made no special provisions for such convicted souls, hence they remain dormant—talents unoccupied. Who is responsible?"

75 Years Ago

February 14, 1921—"Your attention is hereby called to the fact that there is a great need for Orphanage Workers and Funds at this present time. The Jabbok Orphanage [Thomas, Okla.] is especially in need of workers and unless workers are forthcoming in the very near future, the Orphanage will have to be abandoned." In the same issue: "In view of the fact that Bish. S. B. Stoner of Dillsburg, Pa., expects to accompany the brethren, Hostetter and Heise, to Africa with a view of locating and arranging for a missionary rest home, we enter this notice that his farm is for sale and anyone interested should write him at once."

50 Years Ago

February 11, 1946—Jesse W. Hoover, writing about the end of World War II: "This nation of ours is on parole. She has miraculously escaped the unthinkable devastation and misery of most of the other people of the world. It is not because we have been so good. Our hands, as a nation, are reeking with perfidious, unscrupulous grasping for power, and internal injustices. Our fingers are dripping with blood. And the cries of millions of starving, horribly suffering, innocent victims still rises to the ears of God. America is deliberately causing the death of untold multitudes of unfortunate victims during this present winter, by her refusal to allow these ghastly throngs to be fed by those who would minister to them.... Unless there is a more Christian attitude in our dealings with the down trodden and helpless victims of pagan brutality, there can be no hope of their embracing our creeds."

25 Years Ago

February 25, 1971—John Zercher, writing on the theme of "Living in tension": "The result of biblical tension is not the cancelling out of the two truths held in tension, but the discovery of new truth that is exciting and biblical. Out of the tension of grace and human effort rises the truth of obedience. The tension of love for God and love for neighbor produces the life of a love-motivated ministry. And from the tension of individual responsibility and a disciplined fellowship comes the new community of love and concern."

10 Years Ago

February 1986—In an article entitled "Resolving Conflict in Marriage," J. Andrew Stoner writes: "Conflicts are always bilateral in nature. Actions are unilateral, and many times a change by one person may dissolve a conflict.... In resolving a conflict, a couple must see it as 'their' problem, not just that of one or the other.... Here are five steps to following, making prayer an integral part of each step: diffuse, define, discuss, decide, then drop it."

1995; Robert and Jill (Hoover) Heine, Silverdale congregation, Pa.

Hess: Emily Carlene and Megan Joanna, Nov. 28, 1995; Mike and Marcy (Meitzner) Hess, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Kanode: Joshua David, Dec. 6, 1995; Steve and Diane (Gutshall) Kanode, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Keefer: Heath Daniel and Hannah Martine, Dec. 17, 1995; P. Daniel and Heather (Haynes) Keefer, Refton congregation, Pa.

King: Tanner David, Nov. 11, 1995; Don and Lori (Boris) King, Speedwell Heights congregation, Pa.

McCombs-Wenzowski: Rebecca Lynn, Dec. 4, 1995; Jeff Wenzowski and Susie McCombs, Cheapside congregation, Ont.

McNeil: Cailleigh Elizabeth, Dec. 3, 1995; Andrew and Spring McNeil, Westheights congregation, Ont.

Moomaw: Krista Leonora, Dec. 1, 1995; Mike and Sharon (Hock)

Moomaw, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

Rinard: Abigail Helen, Dec. 13, 1995; Lew and Anne (Minahan) Rinard, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Rosenberry: Lindsey Joe, Nov. 18, 1995; Mike and Brenda (Valentine) Rosenberry, New Guilford congregation, Pa.

Sisco: Micaela Marie, Dec. 14, 1995; Curtis and Jacquelyn (Wiersma) Sisco, Baltimore, Md.

Stitely: Isaac Jeffrey, Nov. 23, 1995; Jeff and Fawn (Bumbaugh) Stitely, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

Zimmerman: Jennifer Rose, Aug. 12, 1995; Jim and Sue (Henderson) Zimmerman, Speedwell Heights congregation, Pa.

Weddings

Bartle - Bustos: Claudia Pilar Bustos, daughter of Ivan and Carmen Galleguillos, Santiago, Chile, and Arthur Frank, son of Earl and Barbara Bartle, Brown City, Mich.,

July 14, 1995, at The Tearose, with Rev. Ellen Kraus officiating.

Brown - Martin: Maria Lynette, daughter of Kenneth and Yvonne Martin, Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Jonathan Fitzgerald, son of Harold and Mary Louise Brown, Steelton, Pa., Dec. 23, 1995, at Grantham Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. James Martin officiating.

Crowe - Bryson: Sue Bryson and Bob Crowe, Dec. 1, 1995, at the Five Forks Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Wilbur Besecker officiating.

Landis - Hunsberger: Trish, daughter of Darlene and Ken Hunsberger, and Michael, son of Jake and Lois Landis, Sept. 16, 1995, at Hilltown Baptist Church with Rev. Mark Crocco officiating.

Maddox - McDonald: Tina McDonald, Atlanta, Ga., and Richard Maddox, Loganville, Ga., Nov. 18, 1995, at Grace Community Church with Rev. Chuck Anderson officiating.

Martin - Ressler: Faye Ressler and Lester Martin, Dec. 16, 1995, at

Conoy Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Marlin Ressler and Rev. Richard Long officiating.

McIlveen - Bietsch: Angela Marie, daughter of Judy and Jim Replogle and Larry Bietsch, Fayetteville, Pa., and Matthew Michael, son of Anita and Steve McIlveen, Chambersburg, Pa., Nov. 18, 1995, at Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. David Erisman officiating.

Obituaries

Antle: Wanda Antle, 56, daughter of Jack and Edith Burton McGaha, died Dec. 16, 1995. Surviving her husband, Glen Antle; a daughter, Teresa Grider; three brothers, Leon, Jackie, and Jimmy McGaha; and a sister, Alberta Burton. Wanda was a retired custodian for the Russell County schools, and a member of the Millerfield's congregation, Ky. The funeral was at Bernard Funeral Home with Rev. Richard Lehman officiating. Interment was in Russell Springs Cemetery.

Money Matters

It was "just an apple"!

by W. Edward Rickman

Cooperative Ministries

Receipts—Year to Date
January 1 - December 31, 1995

	1995	1994
Proportionate	<u>2,735,059</u>	<u>2,691,916</u>
Congregational	2,332,000	2,361,377
Individual	403,059	330,539
Designated and		
Direct Giving	<u>940,559</u>	<u>1,103,530</u>
Congregational	677,404	696,163
Individual	273,155	407,367
Total to Date	<u>3,675,618</u>	<u>3,795,446</u>
Total Budget	<u>4,091,643</u>	<u>4,093,469</u>
Received to Date	90%	92%

A short cut through a tomato field on a hot day seemed such an innocent and reasonable alternative to an additional half-mile walk. My friends were near my age, which was about 13. The discovery of what appeared to be "millions" of ripe tomatoes was the trigger for creative and mischievous plans. At first we decided it would be OK to eat a couple of those ripe and juicy red morsels. After all, that farmer wouldn't know or care that a few tomatoes were eaten by those poor weary and hungry travelers. But then the juice started running and splattering, which led to the idea of tossing them at each other to see if we could plaster tomato seeds on some faces. In the process of our fun there were a good many tomatoes wasted. Mind you, there were plenty left in those acres and acres of tomato plants. What we had used were unmeasurable in comparison to all that were left. The farmer still had plenty.

Little did I know that those few tomatoes would have such a drastic affect on my ability to sleep that night. There was this "little voice" which kept reminding me that those tomatoes weren't mine and my actions were actually stealing someone else's property.

After a few days, the uncomfortable feeling began to subside. Finally, I pretty well forgot about the incident. My family moved from that community and a good many years passed.

During those years I graduated from high school, went on to Bible college, and sensed a call from God to Christian service through the ministry.

In the early years of ministry I was invited to do a series of evangelistic services in the church which I attended at the time of the tomato incident, which I had long since forgotten—or at least submerged into my unconscious memory.

However, when I stood to preach to that congregation, the memory of stolen tomatoes reappeared vividly in my mind. I was so consumed with a sense of guilt that I could hardly give my message.

You guessed it! As soon as that service was over, I drove to the farmhouse where the owner of those tomatoes still lived. Although he knew nothing about my having been a party to stealing his tomatoes, I recounted the full story, confessed my guilt, and gave him money to cover his loss.

Over the years I've come to realize

Bingaman: Mary E. Bingaman, born Mar. 15, 1916, daughter of Allen and Nattie Kendall Burkett, died Dec. 5, 1995. Preceding her in death were her husband, Lewis A. Bingaman; four brothers; and a sister. Surviving are two daughters, Nancy M. King and R. Jane Pittman; two sons, Richard L. and Randy L.; seven grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two sisters; and a brother. Mary was an active member of the Hollowell congregation, Pa., having taught Sunday school for over 40 years. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. James A. Sollenberger officiating. Interment was in Broadfording Church Cemetery, Md.

House: Charlotte Joyce House, born Dec. 3, 1930, daughter of Thurlow and Grace Mathewson, died Nov. 12, 1995. Surviving are her husband, Rocky; two sons, Jeff and Bradley; two grandchildren; two brothers; and a sister. Charlotte was a member of the Sherkston congregation, Ont., where she taught preschoolers for many years and

delivered tapes of the services to shut-ins. The funeral was at the church with Rev. Leonard J. Chester officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Mackie: Jay R. Mackie, born Mar. 18, 1934, in Roaring Spring, Pa., died June 27, 1995. Surviving are his wife, Mary (Homsey); two sons, Joseph and Robert; a daughter, Melissa Evans; two grandchildren; a brother, Kenneth; and a sister, Dolly Reynolds. Rev. Mackie attended Messiah College and Elizabethtown College. He graduated from Philadelphia Divinity School and did further graduate study at Episcopal University. He held numerous positions with the Episcopal Church, and was an avid reader and church historian. A funeral requiem was celebrated at St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Inverness, Calif.

Tribute

We thank God for the life and ministry of Jay Mackie, who served for a time with the Brethren in Christ and then spent most of his years in

the Episcopal Church.

Jay was converted at the Blandburg Church under the ministry of Andrew McNiven. He served with the Brethren in Christ as pastor of Mountain Chapel, near Breezewood, Pa., and of a church in Kittanning, Pa. He also worked among the Cheyenne Indians in Hammon, Okla., under Brethren in Christ supervision.

After these assignments he became a minister in the Episcopal Church and served at various locations, including Bedford, Monroeville, Titusville, at the cathedral in Harrisburg, and in Novato, Calif.

Rev. Mackie is remembered as a gifted Bible teacher and as one who reached professional people with the gospel. His ministry touched many people for Christ.

John B. Hawbaker, Bishop Allegheny and Susquehanna Conferences

Martin: Isaac C. Martin, born Mar. 18, 1903, son of Joseph and Lydia Horst Martin, died Nov. 23, 1995. Preceding him in death were 3

brothers; and 8 sisters. Surviving are his wife, Grace E. (Sollenberger); 4 sons, Carl S., Ralph E., Arthur L., and Herbert S.; 15 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren; and a brother. Isaac was a retired farmer and a member of the Chambersburg congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. Kevin Witter and Rev. A. Graybill Brubaker officiating. Interment was in the Air Hill cemetery.

Morningstar: Ross F. Morningstar, born Mar. 21, 1914, son of William and Effie DieffeBaugh Morningstar, died Dec. 7, 1995. Surviving are his wife, Betty (Briggs); two sons, Roscoe and John; three daughters, Gwen George, Marianne Demaree, and Ruthe Morningstar; six grandchildren; and a sister, Edna Walsh. Ross was a member of the Messiah Village church, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. J. Robert Lehman officiating. Interment was in Pine Grove Cemetery.

Tribute

We thank God for the life and ministry of Ross Morningstar, who

that my experience was an illustration of the cause of man's universal problem—*sin*! And where did sin originate? Would you believe it was a problem of *stewardship*?

As was intimated in last month's article, the problem of sin originated with the failure of Adam and Eve in their stewardship of the resources God had given them and entrusted to their care (to their "stewardship," which means care over the possessions of another).

When God outlined their stewardship responsibilities, he made it very clear to Adam and Eve that they had absolute freedom to enjoy and manage all the resources of their known world. However, within the parameters of all those resources, only one exception was made. All was under their management and care, but God reserved just one portion of those resources for his sole purpose. Even though these God-reserved resources were under their management and care, as well as their *ability* to use, God clearly instructed them *not* to allocate these reserved resources for their personal use.

Even though they had every need

supplied, their temptation to partake of God's personally reserved resources led them to ignore their stewardship responsibility and covenant with God. The results were disastrous and far-reaching, affecting even you and me. Even though it was "just an apple," and probably just like bushels more in the garden, there was one significant difference. It was under their care, but reserved by God for his use—not theirs. Allocating just one apple for their personal use instead of respecting God's ownership and reserved purpose was a "stewardship tragedy" which was and is beyond description.

I would suggest that God's principle has never changed. Even after the tragic fall of Adam and Eve, God constructed laws which reserved to himself portions of time and resources that were allocated to all persons. He reserved the Sabbath and established the tithe and various other aspects of material and human resources under human stewardship unto himself.

The principle God originally established is still in effect today. We are still stewards of his creation. He

still retains ownership rights of all we are and have. He still reserves to himself a claim on a portion of the resources under our care. When we are tempted to allocate all the resources under our care for our personal use, we are violating a principle of stewardship which will lead to our own loss of peace, spiritual and material impoverishment, and our awareness of guilt.

It was "just an apple"! But it was his! Oh, the pain of eating "his apple"!

W. Edward Rickman is Executive Director of Stewardship for the Brethren in Christ Church.

served the Brethren in Christ Church as pastor and evangelist for 50 years, from age 19, when he first began preaching, to age 69, when an illness caused him to discontinue active ministry.

He was saved at age 18 during a revival at Saxton, Pa.—a revival in which 600 people were converted over a period of one year—and he carried a burden for revival all his life.

He served as pastor of 10 churches: Saxton, Riddlesburg, Sherman's Valley, Clear Creek, Rainsburg, Mt. Etna, Woodbury, Canoe Creek, Mountain Chapel, and Hunlock Creek. He was pastor at Hunlock Creek for two periods of time, serving a total of 29 years there.

Ross served as evangelist for at least 150 revival meetings. In his preaching he gave a clear call for a decision. In his relationships with people he was a caring pastor and friend.

Ross was a self-supporting pastor, so his life was very busy as he earned a living as well as looked after the work of the church. He served the church sacrificially but with joy and without complaint.

Ross was also strongly committed to his family and made time for family activities. Folks recall seeing him out in the yard, playing baseball with his children and other children of the neighborhood.

In all of Ross's ministry his wife Betty was a partner. Together they visited people in the community. She was, and is, a person of prayer.

Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). We thank God for the light of Christ that shone through Ross Morningstar's life and ministry.

John B. Hawbaker, Bishop

Allegheny and Susquehanna Conferences

Rickel: AuRea Blumenstock Rickel, born June 3, 1909, in Moravia, Iowa, died Dec. 4 in Upland, Calif. She was preceded in death by her husband, Fred R. Rickel; and a son, Ralph. Surviving are a daughter, Katharyn Werho; a son, Charles; 9 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; and a sister, Mary Dissinger. She was a member of the Alta Loma congregation, Calif., participating in many activities and positions of responsibility. Officiating at the funeral were Rev. Charles Rickel, Rev. Alvin C. Burkholder, and Rev. Cass Schrieb. Interment was in Bellevue Memorial Park.

Sponsler: Ethel P. Sponsler, born Sept. 25, 1904, in Cumberland County, Pa., died Dec. 16, 1995. Her husband, Eli M. Sponsler, died in 1975. Surviving are three children, Joel, Ronald, and Jane Mann; 9 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren. Ethel and Eli were charter members of the Redland Valley congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. Jay E. Sisco and Rev. Dave Parsons officiating. Interment was in Emanuel Cemetery.

Wible: Vernon E. Wible, born Oct. 23, 1923, son of Harry and Esther Steigleman Wible, died Dec. 11, 1995. Surviving are his wife, Maye E. (Poe); two sons, Vernon E. Jr. and Douglas A.; a daughter, Jennifer Brechbill; four grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and three sisters. Vernon retired from Grove Manufacturing and enjoyed hunting, fishing, and glass etching. He attended the Chambersburg congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. Kevin Witter officiating. Interment was in Norland Cemetery.

Brethren in Christ 1997 VISION CALENDAR PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

*Denominational Vision: 250 Growing, Discipling,
and sending Congregations by A.D. 2000*

First Prize: \$50.00 and cover location

Second Prize: \$25.00

Third Prize (11 photos): \$10.00

Photographs will be selected by a panel on the basis of:

- a. Technical Quality
- b. Creativity
- c. Representation of one or more areas of emphasis of the denominational vision

Rules of the contest:

- a. Color slides or prints
- b. Put your name and address on each entry
- c. Maximum of four entries per photographer
- d. Photographs must be horizontal format

.....
Deadline is May 18, 1996
.....

Send entries to:

BIC Vision Photo Contest

Evangel Press
2000 Evangel Way, P. O. Box 189
Nappanee, IN 46550

Note: Submission of a photograph(s) in the contest implies that the entrant owns the photograph(s) and, if selected as a winner, gives authorization to Evangel Press to print the photograph(s) in the 1997 BIC Vision Calendar. Evangel Press assumes no responsibility for the return of photographs to the entrant.

Pre-Press Supervisor *Job opportunity in a Christian organization*

Evangel Press, the Brethren in Christ printing facility in Nappanee, Ind., is looking for a pre-press supervisor. The position requires a working knowledge of pre-press functions of a printing plant, including electronic layout and design using Quark Xpress, Pagemaker, Photoshop, and other software; scanning and image manipulation; stripping; platemaking; and proofing. Applicants should possess supervisory skills as well.

Contact Michael L. Courtney at Evangel Press if interested. Phone (800) 253-9315. FAX (219) 773-5934.



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One night a heavily pregnant Mrs. Apolon asked MCC nurse Margaret De Jong to drive her over Haiti's rough, hilly roads to the hospital. On the way Mrs. Apolon's labor became so intense Margaret pulled over, grabbing gloves just in time to catch the baby. To everyone's amazement another head soon emerged.

"Then, after Baby No. 2, were we ever surprised to see a foot appear!" recalls Margaret, who had never before delivered a baby. "It's a miracle of God," she and the family agreed as they surveyed the triplet boys.

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(204) 261-6381

The influence of Upland College

by Arthur M. Climenhaga

One cannot measure the influence of an institution on a program such as a church by its facilities or campus. That is especially true of Beulah/Upland College and the Brethren in Christ Church. The Beulah/Upland campus historically can be measured in three stages. The first campus was the very elemental facilities in the old church building on the northwest corner of Third Avenue and F Street in Upland, Calif. Then came the slightly larger campus on the southeast corner of Arrow Highway and San Antonio Avenue. The third stage was the large development in the southwest corner of Arrow and San Antonio down to Vernon Drive. However, even at the largest point of development, there were only very basic facilities for a college campus. And the student body by all collegiate standards was very small. Thus the campus in and of itself had little impact on the Brethren

in Christ Church as a total body—although it was large enough to host several General Conferences of the North American denomination.

Thus to understand the influence of this collegiate institution on the life and developmental history of the Brethren in Christ Church, we must look at people. Therein lies the wonder of Beulah/Upland College in its 45 year history, from the early days of the 1900s to the present. Many names could be mentioned so that selectivity will have to be exercised. Therefore, instead of names, we will examine performances as we consider both Upland alumni and those who served in faculty and administrative functions.

The founding president of Beulah College served many times as moderator of the denomination's General Conference. The founding dean went on to be the founding president of Ontario Bible School, now known as Niagara Christian College in Ontario, Canada.

As we reflect on the graduates of Beulah/Upland, there were at least five who served as bishops in the larger context of

Beulah College/Upland College Reunion will be held June 26-27, 1996 at the former campus. For information, contact Eloise Engle, 896 W. Arrow, Upland, CA 91786 (909) 985-3861. Donations may be mailed to Ray M. Musser, 404 N. 2nd Ave., Upland CA 91786-4790.

the brotherhood, three of them both in Africa and North America. One other faculty member later served as general superintendent of the India church and mission of the Brethren in Christ. Another graduate has performed a yeoman's task developing and carrying on the work as archivist of the Brethren in Christ Archives. He and others have served on the faculties of both Upland and Messiah Colleges. A former Upland president and two Upland graduates have served as the denominational General Conference secretary. One of these graduates has served as president of both Beulah College and Messiah College. Another Upland president later served as a bishop, the principal of an African Bible institute, and throughout his lifetime was a leading homiletician for the brotherhood.

Space does not allow detailing of Upland graduates who have served on various Brethren in Christ general denominational boards or in various denominational administrative positions. Upland College graduates have filled pastoral roles all across North America. A check of the roster of Brethren in Christ missionaries would reveal a very sizeable percentage of Upland/Beulah graduates.

Shortly after the closing of Upland in 1965, I was on a tour of Southern California as Executive Director of the National Association of Evangelicals. The Upland Brethren in Christ pastor invited me to preach in a Sunday morning service. As we entered the sanctuary, the pastor said, "At the close of your message we are taking up an offering towards the remaining college debt, but I fear it is hopeless. People are discouraged and regard it as a dead cause. However, if you can say a helpful word, please do so."

Thus in my opening remarks before getting into the sermon, I spoke somewhat as follows: "Dear brothers and sisters, as I heard about the plans for the offering this morning, I reflected that some may be saying, 'What's the use of giving? The college is dead.' Dear friends, I frankly disagree! Upland College is very much alive in a thriving

Upland Academy/College reunion attracts people from more than 23 states

Enthusiasm runs high as graduates, former students, staff and faculty make plans to attend the reunion of the Upland (formerly Beulah) Academy and College June 26 and 27, 1996, to be held on the former Upland school campus. To date around 375 family units are "definitely" or "considering" attending these events to celebrate the school's first reunion since its closing in 1965.

Of those planning to attend, 23 percent are from the Upland-Ontario area, 32 percent from Southern California, 8 percent from Northern and Central California, and 10 percent from Pennsylvania. Not surprising is that the largest groups of those considering this event, but not yet committed, reside in Pennsylvania (18 percent), Kansas (10 percent), and states outside of California. In addition to those mentioned, attendees will also come from over 20 other states. Foreign countries represented are Canada, India, Japan and Mexico.

Plans are underway to make this a memorable occasion. In addition to program events detailed in other publications, memorabilia collated and organized

by Carole Engle and committee will be displayed; Posey Pike is collecting names of those who played basketball when she was a coach; and class reunions are being arranged with the help of Phyllis (Burkholder) Keller. Joyce Hostetler is coordinating the use of the Pacific Christian Center which now occupies the former Upland Academy and College campus.

Discussion and planning for this event began several years ago. As this celebration has evolved, one can not help but be impressed by the influence that the Upland school had on the lives and careers of those who attended Beulah/Upland Academy and College. As former students, graduates, faculty and staff gather together from many places, it is in anticipation of celebrating the school and life adventures of many people.

Registration forms are being mailed to graduates, former students, staff and faculty. Updating the mailing list continues to be a tedious task. There are still many people unaccounted for. If you know any graduates, former students, staff and faculty who have not yet received registration forms, please forward their names and address to: Eloise Engle, 896 W. Arrow Highway, Upland, CA 91786. ■

church in south central Africa. Three of your sons have been or are bishops there. Others of your college children are out in Africa, India, Japan, and other parts of the world, propagating the kingdom of God. Listen! When the roll is called up yonder, just think of the world-wide roster of saints who will be there because of

the training ministry of Beulah/Upland College. Oh, yes, Upland College is still living and will live on until Jesus comes!" And what an offering was given that morning.

And so today in a fresh way with the reacquisition of a major portion of the Upland campus, now known as the Pacif-

ic Christian Center, we can still say in the life of the Brethren in Christ Church, Beulah/Upland continues to live on!

Arthur M. Climenhaga was president of both Beulah and Messiah Colleges, as well as serving the Brethren in Christ Church as missionary and church administrator.

Discipleship for the 21st Century

The discomfort of homogeneity

by Harriet Sider Bicksler

I need to make a confession. What I have to say sounds a lot more like not practicing what I preach than I wish it did. Ever since our family moved from an ethnically and racially diverse inner-city neighborhood to a fairly homogenous suburban development, I have worried that I could no longer speak to issues of racism, diversity and multiculturalism with much integrity. Even when we lived in the city, I went to a white suburban church and all my close friends were white. This is still true. Yet because of various life experiences, I think I can probably speak with as much integrity as many people in the North American Brethren in Christ Church. So, having made my confessional disclaimer, here goes.

In early November, I attended the study conference on "Exploring the Brethren in Christ Identity." Included in a paper on the demographics of the denomination was this statistic: 95 percent of us are white. I was actually surprised the number was that low; I would have thought we are closer to 99 percent white, but I guess that the growth of the Hispanic churches in Miami helps to account for the "dip" to 95 percent. Unfortunately, despite the 5 percent of Brethren in Christ in North America who are people of color, the people in attendance at the conference were 100 percent white. I think that's a problem.

My concern is that few of those who attended the study conference (and probably few who attend our overwhelmingly white General Conferences) give much thought to the fact that we are all white, or are concerned about it. I notice how white we are, but I confess I'm still pretty comfortable being with a group of people like myself. It takes a conscious effort

for me to feel uncomfortable. It is that conscious effort to feel the discomfort of homogeneity to which I think we are being called.

John Stott, in an interview in *Prism*, the magazine of Evangelicals for Social Action, describes the "conversion" of people from the Fuller School of World Mission and Church Growth from their belief in the "homogeneous unit principle of church growth." The principle holds that churches are more likely to grow if they reach out to people like themselves. According to Stott, after they were confronted by their critics, the Fuller people "were prepared to say a homogenous unit church is a defective church." Stott goes on: "They said we're going to work toward heterogeneity because we agree that the vision of the redeemed in heaven before the throne of God is a heterogeneous community from every county, and in preparation for the heavenly experience, we must work toward heterogeneity now" (*Prism*, July/August 1995, p. 15).

My question is this: what is the Brethren in Christ Church in North America doing to prepare for the heavenly experience of people from "every tribe and language and people and nation" (see Rev. 5:9)? I know that some congregations are in fact reaching out to and including people of color. And I know that in the worldwide Brethren in Christ church, there are more people of color than there are white people. I'm also excited that a major priority of the church planting endeavor in Philadelphia is growing a multi-ethnic congregation. However—and this is a big however—the average Brethren in Christ congregation in the United States and Canada is representative of its surrounding community and most congregations are in mostly white communities. As a whole, we don't come close to representing the ethnic or racial diversity of the population in either country.

For too long we have been comfort-

able in our homogeneity. While most of us are not outwardly or intentionally racist or prejudiced about people of other races and cultures, it is likely that we sometimes harbor subtle attitudes and assumptions that contradict our belief in a God who is no respecter of persons. These attitudes prevent us from moving out of our homogeneous comfort zones.

Within the evangelical and Anabaptist communities, there are a number of notable efforts at racial reconciliation and inclusion. Two that connect with the Brethren in Christ are Mennonite Central Committee U.S.'s Racism Awareness Project and "broadening the vision" initiative, and the National Association of Evangelicals' working alliance with the National Black Association of Evangelicals. The resources that are available through these organizations demonstrate the fact that growing numbers of white Christians are feeling the discomfort of homogeneity; they know that this discomfort is a necessary first step on the journey toward what Stott calls "our heavenly experience." I'd like to see the Brethren in Christ more actively involved with these and other similar journeys toward racial reconciliation.

As Anabaptists, we believe that the kingdom of God is already here, although not in all its fullness. Our work at racial reconciliation and inclusion here on earth in late 20th century North America is good preparation for joining the "myriads and myriads and thousands and thousands" who will be singing praises to God in heaven. I want to be singing with that crowd in heaven, and I want to know that the Brethren in Christ in North America have contributed more than white people to the crowd.

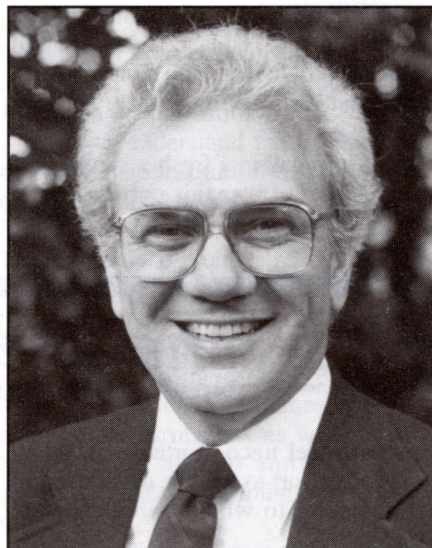
*Harriet Sider Bicksler lives in Mechanicsburg, Pa., and edits **Shalom!**, a Brethren in Christ periodical which focuses on peace and justice issues.*

MESSIAH COLLEGE NEWS

Former U.S. Commissioner of Education and Messiah board member dies

Ernest L. Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and former United States Commissioner of Education, died Friday, December 8 at his home in Princeton, N.J. He was 67. He had been treated for lymphoma for nearly three years.

Dr. Boyer attended Messiah when it was a junior college in 1948 and was later academic dean at Upland College, Messiah's sister institution in California, before it closed. He served on Messiah's Board of Trustees since 1968, acting as chairman for two years, 1982-83, and 1986-87. Messiah College president Rodney Sawatsky spoke at a private family service at the Perkiomen Valley Brethren in Christ Church in Collegeville, Pa.



As president of the Carnegie Foundation, a nonprofit policy study center in Princeton, Boyer was the author of a number of reports that often set the nation's education agenda. In 1987, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (Harper & Row) pointed out that one of the major ills of higher education was that research was taking precedence over teaching. He argued that "at every research university, teaching should be valued as highly as research." His 1983 report, *High School: A Report on Secondary Edu-*

cation (Harper & Row), argued that the nation's most urgent education problem was high schools.

President Clinton remarked in a released statement that "The nation has lost one of its most dedicated and influential education reformers. Ernest Boyer was a distinguished scholar and educator whose work will help students well into the next century."

Born in Dayton, Ohio, Dr. Boyer attended Greenville College and went on to study at Ohio State University. He received his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Southern California and was a post-doctoral fellow in medical audiology at the University of Iowa Hospital. He then taught and served in administrative posts at Loyola University in Los Angeles, Upland College, and the University of California at Santa Barbara.

From 1965 to 1977 he worked for the State University of New York, the last seven years as its chancellor. As head of the largest university in the United States, he directed a system of 64 institutions with over 350,000 students and 15,000 faculty members. In 1977 he was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to become the United States Commission on Education's last commissioner before Congress elevated the position to cabinet rank. He joined Carnegie in 1980. Dr. Boyer held more than 130 honorary degrees.

He is survived by his wife, Kathryn, and four children, Ernest Jr., of Brookline, Mass., Beverly Coyle of Princeton, N.J., Craig of Belize, and Paul, of Chestertown, Md.

Students Christmas missions project

Eighteen Messiah students spent part of their Christmas break helping the less fortunate. From December 16 through 20 in Washington, D.C., students working with the Center for Student Missions helped the homeless in soup kitchens, and worked with both children's and elderly ministries. From January 1 through 6, another group of students went to Beverly, Ky., and served with the Red Bird Mission doing construction, working in a community store that donates clothes and furniture, and teaching pre-school. Messiah's World Christian Fellowship sponsored the trip.

SENIORS APPLY NOW

High school seniors planning to attend Messiah College this September should apply now. Here are three things students need to do to apply:

1. Complete and submit the Messiah College application, a copy of which is bound between pages 32 and 33 of the college catalog.

2. Have official transcripts of courses, grades, and standardized test scores sent to the Messiah College Admissions office. Messiah will accept either Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Testing (ACT) scores.

3. Have two recommendations, including one from your pastor or youth director, sent to the Messiah College Admissions Office. Recommendation forms are included in the application booklet.

The Messiah College Admissions Office is open weekdays from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Call or write for a catalog, application form, financial aid information, or campus visit information: Admissions Office, Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027, (717) 691-6000.

General Conference Information

A special five page insert was published last month in the *Evangelical Visitor*. It had three registration forms:

FORM A—to be filled out by everyone attending General Conference and/or the pre-conference. This includes men, women, and children—even those commuting from home. Form A should be sent to General Conference Registrar, Sharon Benner, P.O. Box 290, Grantham, PA 17027-0290. (People attending *only evening sessions* need not register.)

FORM B—To be filled out by those who need transportation from and/or to the airport. This form should be sent to Chris Taylor.

TUESDAY REGISTRATION FORM—to be filled out by everyone who plans to participate in any of the Tuesday afternoon and evening activities. Please note the special date when this registration form must be in. This early date is necessary so adequate transportation can be arranged and appropriate reservations made on our behalf.

Because of the holidays in both the U.S. and Canada, it is extremely important to make travel reservations early. (The same urgency applies for area campsites and motels.) You are urged to book your flight to the Ontario Airport for convenience and less travel cost to the Azusa campus.

MTS Travel, Ephrata, PA, is the official travel agency for the coming General Conference. United Airlines will be the official carrier for people who purchase their tickets through MTS Travel, and United will give a 5 percent discount. Anyone traveling between June 21 and July 14 is eligible. Call the MTS toll-free number and tell them you are inquiring about the Brethren in Christ General Conference discount on United Airlines. In the United States and Canada the toll-free number is (800) 233-0157.

Do not send any money with your registration forms. In response to your registration, you will receive a confirmation indicating the charge for registration, lodging, and/or meals. Those who pay before going to General Con-

ference will shorten their time in the registration line.

Exciting activities for children and youth are being planned. Children through age 11 will have supervised learning experiences as in previous



conferences. The cost per child will be \$12.50 per child. Excellent youth activities (ages 12-19) are also planned (cost \$40). More details will be forthcoming.

There will be a reunion of the Beulah/Upland College and Academy prior

to General Conference. Persons wishing to attend may make reservations to stay at Azusa Pacific University for Tuesday-Thursday, June 25-27, by contacting Willard W. Heisey, 880 El Mirador, Upland, CA 91784-1876; telephone (909) 982-5112. If you are attending General Conference, you must still send in a General Conference registration form in addition to registering with Willard. These must be two separate registrations.

From January through June, Conference information will be supplied through the *Visitor*. You will find it helpful to keep all these copies at hand for easy reference.

For more information on *registration only*, contact Sharon Benner, P.O. Box 290, Grantham, PA 17027-0290. Telephone between the hours of 8:00-4:30, Monday through Friday, at (717) 697-2634.

For information concerning all other Conference details, contact Ken Mark, Convention Director, 304 Berkshire Rd., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055, telephone (717) 766-0403. You can leave a recorded message at this number. Ken can also be reached through e-mail, KMARK@MESSIAH.EDU.

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MESSIAH COLLEGE Grantham, Pennsylvania



Opening the Word of Life

by
Rick Mailloux

Looking at "Follow"

Lucy was in a spot. She had been given the assignment by her king to wake up four very tired people, tell them something they probably wouldn't believe, and then try to get them to do something they certainly wouldn't like.

C.S. Lewis, in *Prince Caspian* (the second book in the Chronicles of Narnia series), tells the story of how four followers of Aslan (a lion representing Christ in the Narnia tales) are transported from our world into the magical kingdom of Narnia to help renew this kingdom which had fallen into evil hands. After a long day of walking (the wrong way) to try to find the good Prince Caspian, the four (Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy), accompanied by a dwarf, finally stopped for the night and quickly dropped off to sleep.

During the night, Lucy woke out of a deep sleep with the feeling that Aslan was calling her name. She rose and found him a little way off. After a joyous reunion, Aslan tells her, "We must not lie here long. You have work in hand and much

time has been lost today.... Go back to the others now and wake them up; tell them you have seen me again and that you must all get up at once and follow me."

"But they won't believe me!" said Lucy."

"It doesn't matter," said Aslan... 'If they will not (follow), then you at least must follow me alone.'"

When Jesus called his disciples, he said, "Follow me" (e.g., Mt. 4:20; Mk. 1:17,18; 2:14). The Greek word for "follow" is *Akoloutheo* and it means "to be in the same way with; to walk the same road with someone." The "road" was to be lifelong. Jesus is saying, "Follow me and keep on following. Continue as a habit of life to walk with me along the same road. Join me as my disciple; side with me. Come, enjoy my companionship and learn from me. Walk with me and you will become like me in time."

The Greek verb *Akolouthein* ("to follow") was used in ancient writings outside the Bible in several common ways, which are helpful for us in learning more about how to follow Jesus.

1. The Greek word was used of slaves attending to their masters. Christians are in the position of the slave; we must obey as soon as the Master speaks (Rom. 6:16-18).

2. It was used of a person acting on the advice or counsel of another. Believers must seek—through the study of the Word of God, prayer, meditation and godly counsel—the mind of Christ, and have the humility and courage to follow it.

3. It described a citizen obeying the laws of government. As believers we are citizens of Christ's kingdom. Part of faith

is agreeing to live according to the laws of the kingdom.

4. It was used to speak of a learner (listener) carefully following the line of thought of a teacher so that the student grasps it well enough to be able to explain it to another. As disciples, we are to grow in "the grace and knowledge" of Christ (2 Pet. 3:18), but not just to keep it to ourselves. We are to invite others to follow Christ and instruct them in his way (Mt. 28:19-20).

5. Finally, the Greek word for "follow" was used to describe a person taking interest in another in order to gain a certain kind of help or favor. We say with the Apostle Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (Jn. 6:68). We have need of forgiveness of sins; we have need of eternal life. We look to Christ alone to supply us.

Lucy discovered that "following" Aslan, like following Jesus, means to obey even when confronted with difficult choices and temporary unpleasant results. Lucy obeyed—she carried out Aslan's will (which is the essence of following). Following Jesus involves devotion and sacrifice. It involves a cross (Mt. 16:24). This is terribly out of fashion, but to follow Jesus is for a person to say "No" to his or her self. We no longer do what we like without regard to Christ's will and way. To follow Christ is to put him at the very center of our world. William Barclay wrote, "To follow Jesus may well mean the sacrifice of the pleasures, habits, aims, and ambitions which have woven themselves into our lives. Following Jesus always involves this act of surrender" (*New Testament Words*, p. 45).

Jesus calls us, as one writer put it, to "a long obedience in the same direction." The result is to no longer walk in darkness, but in the light (Jn. 8:12); to be transformed (Rom. 12:2); to know the sure and certain hope of eternal life and the glory of being with Christ in heaven (Jn. 12:26), and finally joy (Jn. 15:10-11).

Lucy found all the above to be true. (By the way, the others responded to Lucy's call and as a result, Narnia was restored. You just must read these books!) To follow is sometimes, maybe often, hard. The result of following (however hard and frightening) is joy.

Rick Mailloux lives near Goshen, Ind., with his wife and three children. Rick is the former pastor of both the Christian Union and the Nappanee Brethren in Christ congregations.

CALENDAR

OF REGIONAL AND GENERAL CONFERENCE EVENTS

Board meetings are held at Grantham, Pa., unless otherwise noted. For more information, contact the denominational office, P.O. Box 290, Grantham, Pa. 17027; phone (717) 697-2634.

Mar. 1-2	Pacific Regional Conference—Pomona, Calif.
Mar. 15-16	Midwest Regional Conference—Colorado Springs, Colo.
Mar. 15-16	Central Regional Conference—Massillon, Ohio
Mar. 29-30	Atlantic Regional Conference—Souderton, Pa.
Mar. 30	Allegheny Regional Conference—Five Forks, Waynesboro, Pa.
April 12-13	Susquehanna Regional Conference—Mifflintown, Pa.
April 26-27	Southeast Regional Conference—Millerfields, Ky.
April 26-27	Canadian Regional Conference—Wainfleet, Ont.
May 11	Messiah College Commencement
June 26-27	Beulah/Upland College & Academy Reunion (Upland, Calif.)
June 29-July 3	General Conference (Azusa, Calif.)
Sept. 27-28	"An Aging Church in an Aging Society" Study Conference—Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Onesimus

Dear Paul,

I have one thing of significance on my calendar this month.

It's a night away with my wife at a fancy hotel.

It's one of those grand old dames of an inn whose stone and brick and rich wood paneling oozes history and romance. We're unabashedly and unapologetically leaving the kids with friends for a whole twenty-four hours—getting away for the express purpose of holding hands, sleeping in, and drinking steaming dark cappuccinos in quiet, softly-lit corners, curled up in over-stuffed, high-backed chairs.

You may be wondering if, in our situation, this is something we can really afford. Granted, it's hardly in keeping with our commitment to a "simpler lifestyle." And with all of the work to be done out here, one might question whether it's really a wise use of our limited resources.

You better believe it is.

See, I learned a long time ago that if I don't look after my marriage, nobody will. Not only is there a growing consensus in society that marriage is for goofballs, but there also seems to be a growing *laissez faire* attitude within the church towards the permanence of matrimony.

I keep hearing stories like these. A high-visibility Christian singer, voted Female Vocalist of the Year by the Gospel Music Association eleven years in a row, admitted to having two extramarital relationships with married men before her own marriage ended in divorce. A well-known pastor of a 3,000-member church and preacher on a \$35-million-a-year radio and television ministry has, in his wife's words, refused "to accept the critical state of our marriage." She has filed for divorce, and he has refused to step down from his pulpit and from his media ministry—even though he has publicly taught that a divorced man is disqualified from serving as pastor.

And here's something that really scares me. With a presidential election coming up this year, and with so many Christians rallying around a particular political party known for championing "traditional family values," it's incredibly ironic that both of the two front runners for this particular party's nomination left their first wives. Add to that list the Speaker of the House and our own governor of the Western Empire—all leaders of significance in this same "pro-family" party. Ha! So much for family values.

I guess I'm coming to re-appreciate the weightiness you and the Lord give to the marriage union. It's hard to tip-toe around your instructions to the Corinthian church: "To the married I give this command.... A wife must not separate from her husband.... And a husband must not divorce his wife." And the Lord's words couldn't be stronger in affirming the permanence of this union: "...the two will become one flesh.... So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

The problem I see is that we no longer hold up as role models

those whose marriages have stood the test of time. It sometimes seems as if we are so busy reaching out to those whose marriages are broken that we forget to revere those whose marriages are still intact.

I have some heroes in this regard—two of whom you may have heard. Both of them are former bishops. Neither will ever be known much beyond our own circle of churches. But both have inspired me to continue to fight the good fight in making sure my own marriage endures.

One, known as Ralphinius the Encourager, spent many, many years in his early ministry, week after week, visiting a wife he could no longer care for and who no longer knew who he was. She had contracted a deadly, debilitating disease that left her bed-ridden—a mere shadow of the woman he had married. Yet as the months turned into years—even as brothers and sisters in the faith gently encouraged him to "get on with his life"—still Ralphinius remained faithful to the one to whom he had said, "Til death do us

part." I have been moved to a deeper commitment to my own marriage vows because of the example of this man.

The other, Alvinus the Elder, a gentle, godly man, recently wrote of the last few months of his 67-year marriage to the love of his life:

...We had always prayed together in the evening before retiring to bed, but after her stroke, bed time was very precious. We spent generally a time of speaking of our love and appreciation for each other, using endearing words. We then quoted Scripture.... Upon saying "Good night," I quoted the Priestly Blessing given in Numbers 6:24-26: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

He writes of how she died quietly in her sleep with him, her husband of 67 years, at her side. What a picture of love: A prayer, a blessing, a releasing. What an example of what a marriage can and should be.

I still remember a Proverb that I learned as a young man. It has encouraged and exhorted me over the years: "May your fountain be blessed," it says, "and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth." I'll be the first to admit that my failings as a husband are legion. I'm too often insensitive, distracted, and downright unromantic. But I'm also committed—committed to staying married to the wife of my youth, til death do us part.

So, I have one thing of significance on my calendar this month. It's a night away with my wife at a fancy hotel. I can afford to do it, because in this age, I definitely can't afford not to do it. And besides that, Paul, I'm madly in love with this woman. And I can't wait to grow old with her.

I'll drink a cup of cappuccino for you, brother.

Your brother in Christ,

O.

Not only is there a growing consensus in society that marriage is for goofballs, but there also seems to be a growing laissez faire attitude within the church towards the permanence of matrimony.

Readers may correspond with Onesimus by writing to him c/o the *Evangelical Visitor*, P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550. Letters to Onesimus may be published unless they are marked "Personal—Not for Publication."

Focusing our Mission

For the cause of Christ

by Warren L. Hoffman

Recently I read *Long Walk to Freedom*, the autobiography of Nelson Mandela. From a tribal son to the presidency of South Africa, the road to personal and political freedom for Nelson Mandela was paved with sacrifice.

Born in 1918, Nelson Mandela was raised among the Thembu people with a rich tribal upbringing. By 1943 he found himself being drawn into the "civilized" (that is, compliant) black elite as a law-abiding attorney. Aware of the hardships of black South Africans, he also heard the call to militant African nationalism.

In 1944 Mandela joined the struggle for racial and political freedom. "I am no more virtuous or self-sacrificing than the next man," he writes, "but I found that I could not even enjoy the poor and limited freedom I was allowed when I knew my people were not free."

As one of his first efforts, he helped form the Youth League of the African National Congress. The creed of this political organization was the

overthrow of white supremacy, the creation of one nation out of the many tribes, and the establishment of democracy in South Africa.

As a leader of an organization declared illegal, Mandela's hardships began. He was arrested and acquitted. When another warrant was issued for his arrest, he became a fugitive. Though he eluded pursuit to attend an out-of-country conference, friends were arrested, travel was delayed, and border crossings were dangerous lest he be discovered and caught. After nine months out of the country, which included six months of military training, he returned to South Africa.

Mandela was captured and arrested. Facing charges of inciting African workers to strike and trade illegally, he was convicted and sentenced to five years of imprisonment. He entered prison at the age of 44—an incarceration which, in the end, stretched to 27 years.

During Mandela's long and lonely years of imprisonment, he continued his tenacious pursuit of racial and political liberation. Over this time, he became a symbol of resistance to South African apartheid. Finally, pressured by a changing world, South African's white president, F. W. de Klerk, freed Nelson Mandela—by that time, 71 years of age.

In the ensuing months, Mandela and de Klerk emerged as principal negotiators in talks aimed at racial equity and harmony, an effort which culminated in their sharing the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize. In 1994 Nelson Mandela was elected president in the first national, non-racial, one-person-one-vote election in the history of South Africa.

Throughout the book Mr. Mandela refers to himself as a freedom fighter. A freedom fighter, he points out, is a person for whom personal sacrifice is accepted as the normal course in a

struggle for racial and political freedom.

People with equal abhorrence for racial injustice can rightly debate the philosophical underpinnings, associates, tactics, and personal decisions of Nelson Mandela in his fight for political and racial freedom. But his readiness to endure hardship for the sake of his cause challenges us in our service for Christ.

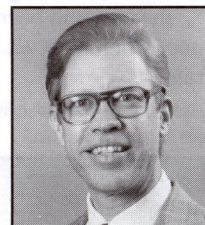
As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are also freedom fighters. We do not fight with worldly weapons, and we proclaim a freedom already won through Jesus Christ. Yet in the struggle to see people liberated from sin and its effects, there are many occasions for sacrifice as part-and-parcel of our commitment. It is not lightly that Jesus admonished us to count the cost of being his disciple (Luke 14:28).

The account of Mandela's life in *Long Walk to Freedom* prompts an unsettling question: As freedom fighters in the cause of Christ, are we prepared to sacrifice as much, for as long a time, as Nelson Mandela?

**250 Growing, Discipling,
Sending Congregations
by A.D. 2000**



Warren Hoffman
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Atlantic and the
Southeast Regional
Conferences of the
Brethren in Christ
Church.



Evangelical Visitor

The 14th of February is dedicated to romance. Anniversaries and other special days have their romantic overtones, but no day is so unabashedly romantic as is Valentine's Day.

One will not find the day listed among the church's Holy Days. This is understandable, although it is really Saint Valentine's Day. We are not suggesting that it be placed on a par with Easter and Christmas. But should not the day have equal billing with Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day? I have heard mothers extolled on Mothers' Day and fathers reminded on Fathers' Day in Sunday school openings and in the worship hour. I have, to my knowledge, never heard a sermon in praise of romance delivered on the Sunday nearest to Valentine's Day.

Maybe romance is not that of which sermons are made, but it is that of which good marriages consist. The virtues of motherhood and the strength of fatherhood will both be found wanting if the quality of romance is absent in the marriage relationship.

Pity the wife from whose heart romance has fled; who at about this time of year does not hunt for a lace trimmed card with sentiments she feels, but cannot quite bring herself to say. And now, having found just the card, she places it where her husband will find it, and, if possible, will watch from an unobserved vantage point as he opens and reads it.

Shame on the husband who no longer lets himself be carried away into buying one of those heart-shaped boxes of candy—where the box costs more than the candy, and who then watches with a school boy shyness as she opens the box and says, "You shouldn't have done it!" And both know deep in their hearts that he should have. Maybe it's a pretty dress they could not afford—except on Valentine's Day—or a meal in a restaurant with cloth napkins, candles at each table, and tables just for two.

Of such things and others is romance made. How tragic the marriage from which it has fled. How sad the home where the eyes do not light up at the sight of the other or the heartbeat quicken at the touch of the hand. How irreparably deprived are those children of a home where the fire of romance has been allowed to go out and words of endearment are never heard and acts of affection are never seen.

But marriages cannot survive on romance alone. Romance is too fragile to by itself weather the storms which beat upon the marriage. One of the causes of our mounting marriage casualties is that romance is seen as the foundation of marriage. Our society has asked it to bear more than it is able and in the process both marriage and romance become casualties. Of itself it is an inadequate base.

Unless we are prepared to resort to "planned" marriages as is the pattern in other cultures, romantic love will continue to be the initial and powerful catalyst which will bring a man and a woman to the marriage altar. Romantic

In praise of romance

love will be that which will cause them not only to be willing but to be eager to forsake all others and to accept the responsibilities and disciplines of the marriage state.

For the long pull, more than romance is needed. The foundation from the biblical perspective is faithfulness. A stable marriage must be undergirded by a commitment to each other that is binding regardless of the ebb and flow of feelings and the variations of circumstances. Faithfulness means that there is no room for second thoughts; that there is no going back, for deep within each partner all bridges have been burned and all options destroyed. It is on such a foundation that marriages are built and such a foundation is required for their survival.

The Christian marriage has an added quality. To faithfulness is added Christian love—agape love. Romantic love is partly self-centered and self-motivated. Agape love is "other-centered." Romantic love is based on the qualities and virtues and worth seen in the other person which will bring enrichment to the life of the admirer. Agape love is based on Christ's caring love expressed in and through us. It is kind and longsuffering. It goes the second mile. It forgives and heals. It is unilateral—given regardless of response. But agape love, in itself, is not an adequate basis for marriage. It is an essential ingredient in its survival and its health, but we do not marry on the basis of agape love.

Marriages held together by faithfulness alone may be little more than a legal contract or an economic convenience. Add to this agape love and one has added qualities of caring and respect. But, in truth, this adds no quality different than that which should characterize the relationship of all Christians with each other.

Give me a marriage founded upon faithfulness, supported by agape love, and lighted by romance, and I will show you a relationship which is the envy of angels and the joy of the whole earth. It is from such marriages that children will rise up and call their parents blessed.

Romance is a fragile thing. It needs the constant attention of husband and wife. It will die in the pressure of a too busy life and the aridity of thoughtlessness and selfishness. It needs the kind word, the affectionate glance, the unexpected act of thoughtfulness, the evening alone, and the added pressure to the held hand. Romance, like man, does not live by bread alone.

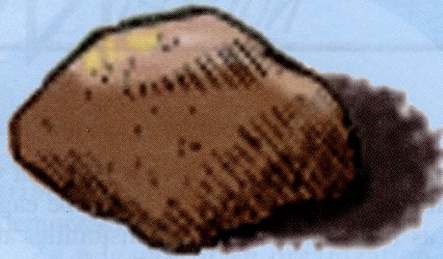
Romance transforms the vows of faithfulness from an obligation to privilege. It stops the "second thoughts" before they begin and defuses the wayward glance.

Faithfulness, agape love, and romance are a holy trinity which will make the marriage relationship a touch of heaven on earth. We need a renewed emphasis upon this trinitarian doctrine. We have been paying a tragic price for its neglect.

John Zercher, Feb. 10, 1973

Pet rock syndrome

by Kay Kuzma



I wondered how many of our children are like that pet rock. We live with them, we've grown accustomed to their ways, but are oblivious to their true value.

I wasn't paying much attention. The TV was on in the other room so I didn't hear all the story, but it was something about this fellow who had a pet rock. It sat on his desk for weeks, months...it may have been years.

Then one day someone noticed the rock, picked it up, examined it, and recognized its potential—a treasure that, when cut and polished by caring hands, would be worth millions.

At the mention of the extraordinary turn of events, I ran to the TV just in time to see the stone being polished. The inside beauty, with its shape and rich blue color, was starting to appear. The pet rock was in the process of becoming a stunning, multiple-karat gem!

As I reflected on the story, I wondered how many of our children are like that pet rock. We live with them, we've grown accustomed to their ways, but are oblivious to their true value. With some cutting and polishing by caring hands, their true potential can emerge.

The importance of actively building a child's character was made clear to me when I was miles above the earth. "We have reached our cruising altitude of 35,000 feet," the pilot's voice came crackling over the intercom. "It's a little choppy up here. We're doing everything we can to make your ride as comfortable as possible, but..." I tightened my seat belt. "I hate turbulence," I muttered as the plane bounced through the air. My seat mate laughed.

He was an administrator of a large juvenile detention facility with more than nine hundred incarcerated kids. In the

course of our conversation I learned that his facility, although one of the best, had only a forty percent success rate in preparing the kids to fit into society without having them return at some future date.

When I probed for an answer to why the majority of the kids ended up back in jail, he responded, "These kids have never heard of integrity. Their value systems are confused—upside down—and we have to lay a foundation for a new way of thinking. We've got to teach these kids, from the inside out, a whole new set of values. And it's difficult to do what needs to be done so late in life—and in such a short period of time. If they could have a more supportive family or peer group when they return to society, it would make a real difference."

I was troubled with what he said. Yet I knew that the philosophy and way of life of many people today is opposite to God's way. Contrast God's way with the confused, upside-down way of the world. The dominant motivating force for the worldly person today is self-gratification, winning by whatever means possible, acting dishonest as long as you don't get caught, solving problems with violence,

performing questionable acts as long as it feels good, and having little respect for authority.

There is a character crisis in our culture. An effective way to solve this crisis is with a plan that starts within your own heart and home, and starts now! Postponement will only make the task more difficult. Halfhearted resolve will never do it. Building your child's character must become your all-consuming passion. But it can't be done effectively unless you are working daily on your own character development—a task that is equally challenging!

How can our children develop godly characters in a society that doesn't know the meaning of integrity? Somehow we have to instill integrity, which by definition is the quality or state of being of sound moral principle; uprightness, honesty, and sincerity; in perfect condition; complete. We must develop those fundamental, biblical principles that will help them develop distinctive characters in spite of growing up among corrupting influences.

True character development must begin on the inside with correct motives, unselfish desires, and pure thoughts that come as a result of having a close relationship with God. When kids are spiritually healthy, we don't have to worry about them catching society's "colds"!

You must assume the responsibility for developing your child's character, and with the Master Designer's help, nurture it, inspire it, and polish it until your child's character is everything God intended it to be—Christlike and beautiful "from the inside out."

Dr. Kay Kuzma is author of A Hug & a Kiss—And a Kick in the Pants and Building Your Child's Character From the Inside Out (both David C. Cook). Excerpted from Building Your Child's Character... by permission of Chariot Family Publishing.

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